

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale in Their Endless Mountain Home

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Introduction

Travelers complained in letters and reminiscences how during wet months of the year the hard clay became deep ruts, supporting treacherous puddles on the Harmony Turnpike.¹ Despite their complaints, the turnpike

¹The information presented in this article is an outgrowth of my research for the Historic Sites Division of the LDS Church History Department in conjunction with the reconstruction of the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale farm (1787–1841) and the Jesse and Mary Hale/Joseph and Emma Smith farm (1813–1830) in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. I am grateful to Betty Smith, Director of the Susquehanna County Historical Society, for her generous help throughout this research; Jean Green, Head of Special Collections, at University Binghamton University Libraries and Nicolette Dobrowolski, Head of Public Services, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, and numerous other staff members of their institutions for providing access to significant collections. I'm also grateful to Harold N. Hoyal, Ben Park, Heidi Harris, Jason Twede, Dawn Agenti, the staff of the Bishop Memorial Library (which houses the Luzerne County Historical Society) in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., Stan Thayne, and Mary Jean Vance who each helped on elements of the project. Also, my colleagues Donald L. Enders, Jennifer L. Lund, Steven L. Olsen, and Benjamin C. Pykles each patiently listened as I worked on elements of the research and responded to my thoughts or shared their own as the project developed.



The Old Harmony Turnpike coming down Oquago Mountain on the east edge of Oak Hill with Lanesville (now Lanesboro) in the distance. George Edward Anderson, 1909. Courtesy LDS Church History Library.

was the quickest route from western New York to the urban areas of southern Pennsylvania and the thoroughfare was always busy. Silas Gildersleve wrote his family on September 18, 1823, after traveling the turnpike, and noted how although they had terrible weather, he, his wife, and his mother-in-law managed to travel the road “as well as Could be Expected.”² In the latter part of October 1825, the fall rains would have made the road particularly dangerous where it descended into northeastern Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna Valley. Winter approached, and one long-time resident, fifty-five-year-old Josiah Stowell had a wagon full of men from the vicinity of Palmyra, New York, he was bringing to work in Harmony Township before they could no longer dig the frozen ground. A successful farmer, sawmill operator, and grain trader, Stowell hired the men either because he “had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Span-

²Silas Gildersleve, letter to Family, September 18, 1823, John Comfort Correspondence, George Fisk Comfort Papers, Syracuse University Special Collections; see also, Charles Wentworth Upham, *The Life of Timothy Pickering* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1878), 4:116.

iards” or “an old document had fallen into his possession,” which “minutely described” the spot where a mine had existed in that valley. He and others had already searched the spot with hired hands, but he was returning for another effort with a new workforce to help him find it, including Joseph Smith Sr. and his son, nineteen-year-old Joseph Smith Jr. This group of men left the Stowell farm heading southwest out of South Bainbridge, New York, crossing the Susquehanna River at the bridge leading into Harpursville, continuing south through Colesville by climbing Cole’s Hill past Badger’s tavern on the west side of the road at the crest, then dropping down the other side sliding toward the shallow Susquehanna River where the Windsor Bridge Company had earlier that year finished a toll bridge precluding the need to cross it using a ferry, and finally rattling down the Harmony Turnpike toward Pennsylvania into what they called the Endless Mountains.³

Four miles south of Colesville, the work party passed the Stow Cemetery, a small collection of burials abutting the east side of the road that would have caught their attention. Two of the ominous headstones at the edge of the turnpike were for Joseph Smith, who died on March 10, 1792, and Josiah Stow, a local farmer and grave robber, who died on April 2, 1820, the latter not to be confused with Josiah Stowell. The modest headstones the men could see as they traveled were made by stonemason J. W. Stewart, known for years as “Coffin Man.” But it was Oliver Harper’s large, ornate headstone just to the south of the two simple ones that would have likely been the focus of any discussion the men had with its neatly chiseled inscription announcing Harper had been robbed and murdered the previous year on March 11, 1824. The headstone, made by “Eclectic Man,” included visual symbols from Harper’s life.⁴

³Windsor Bridge Company, Subject Files, Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, New York; “Trial Notes of Scribe A, Transcription of the Testimony Given at the Trial of Jason Treadwell, August, 1824,” Historic Site Files, LDS Church History Library, hereafter CHL. A transcription of the trial notes has also been placed on file with Betty Smith, Susquehanna County Historical Society, Montrose, Pennsylvania, hereafter cited as “Trial Notes of Scribe A.” Photocopies of the original trial notes were provided by Shari Whitney of the Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

⁴The Stow Cemetery is also known as “Lyons Farm Cemetery” and “North Windsor Cemetery.” Stonemasons work in a distinctive style that makes it possible to identify headstones as coming from a particular individual as is done with other works of art. There are a large number of headstones made by “Coffin Man” in the

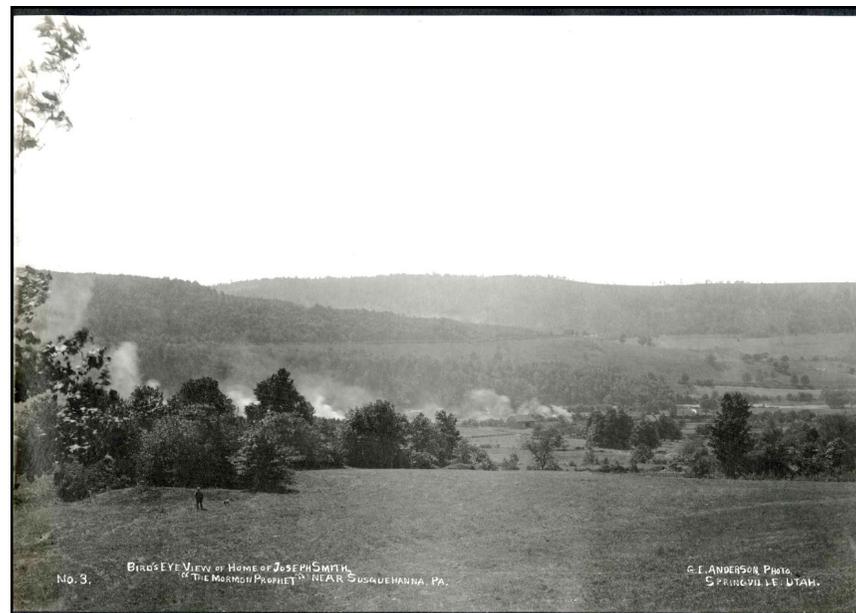


Looking north on the Harmony Turnpike from Pennsylvania into New York. George Edward Anderson, 1909. Courtesy LDS Church History Library.

As the group rattled closer to Harmony Township, they traveled the last section of the turnpike in an experience described by a later newspaper reporter as like “being rolled in a barrel.” He insisted the turnpike could “guarantee the traveler a shaking he will not forget in a month.” But the reporter acknowledged, “And what is the one thing that would atone for so many inconveniences? The scenery, sir! The scenery!”⁵

region, and Nancy Mess has identified him as J. W. Stewart of Coventryville, New York. Another distinctive stone carver with a number of headstones in the larger Colesville area is “Eclectic Man,” who included a variety of masonic symbols on his stones suggesting the involvement of the deceased in that organization. He was likely a local Freemason. “Eclectic Man” carved the Oliver Harper headstone. Nancy Mess has suggested “Eclectic Man” may have been a brother or son of J.W. Stewart because of similarities in their work. So far, however, it has not been possible to identify a specific carver, Nancy Lynn Mess, Cemetery Historian, Ithaca, New York, personal communication to author, March 6, 2015. Photographs of these headstones are in the author’s collection.

⁵John D. Monroe, *Chapters in the History of Delaware County, New York*



“Money Hole” in trees behind boy and dog to the left; Hale apple and pear orchard, center right. George Edward Anderson, 1909, Courtesy LDS Church History Library.

The wooded mountains rising from the landscape were stupendous. In 1825 it had been eight years since Joseph Smith Jr. and his father left the green mountains of Vermont for the more open landscape of western New York. The massifs were reminiscent of their Vermont environs. When the Harmony Turnpike crossed the Pennsylvania state line, the Allegheny Mountain foothills began their gentle rise. The pinkish purple blossoms of Jo Pye weed along the road had long since faded, and now the bright yellows of the towering chestnuts in the river floodplain, the muted browns of the oaks leaning over the road, the brilliant reds of the maples in groves on the higher, south-facing mountain slopes, and the deep greens of the six hundred year old hemlocks on the north facing mountainsides all began to rise and fall in a pattern familiar to Vermont emigrants.

As the turnpike squeezed between the mountains, the rough road slumped into the Susquehanna Valley descending toward the river bend with its consistent early morning fog and faint smell of wet earth. The turnpike crossed the river at the bridge into Lanesville where it continued

(Delaware, New York: Delaware County Historical Association, 1949), 89–97, 109.

south past what locals called the “Vermont settlement” on Tyler Road. The bridge’s loose stones were worked out of its walls the previous spring when Jason Treadwell, a local sandy hair, red bearded, cross-eyed prankster accused of murdering Oliver Harper, had frantically pulled them out searching for a hidden four hundred dollars he claimed was placed there. Treadwell sobbed when he couldn’t find the money, claiming it was stolen by an accomplice in robbery.⁶ The travel party likely paid little attention to the bridge that had Martin Lane’s tollgate on the other side, as they followed the bend in the river veering right at the turn onto Oquago Road—a road described by travelers as a narrow, rut-filled, tree-root-bound path running west between Oquago Mountain and the north bank of the Susquehanna River. The Stowell work party went a little over a mile and a half west on Oquago Road where a narrow footbridge on the west side of a small cemetery connected the families across the river and marked the beginning of the farm of Vermont emigrants Isaac and Elizabeth Hale.

While helping Josiah Stowell look for the rumored Spanish silver, Joseph Smith Jr. took lodging on the rocky farmstead of the Hale family—an unproductive lot running from the riverbank north to Oquago Road above the floodplain. The farm continued north of the road through a section of swampy ground known in local dialect as a “swaily,” and onto the mountainside with a large stand of ancient hardwood forest thinning at the top to provide a good view of the surrounding area at a spot known in local dialect as a “keek” from the Scottish for a peep or quick look.⁷

It was on this largely unimproved farm that Joseph Smith Jr. first met Isaac and Elizabeth Hale. A traveling minister, who preached in the Hale home, remembered Isaac Hale as “a shrewd, witty man”; one of his neighbors identified him in court testimony the previous year as “old Mr. Hale,” but most of his neighbors would have recognized in him a devoted husband and father, a devout Christian, and a developed backwoodsman who preferred solitude and independence, even in his request to be buried apart from his neighbors.⁸ Isaac’s wife, Elizabeth Lewis Hale, may have gone by

⁶“Trial Notes of Scribe A,” and “Trial Notes of Scribe B, Transcription of the Testimony Given at the Trial of Jason Treadwell, August, 1824,” in possession of the author and on file with Betty Smith, Susquehanna County Historical Society, Montrose, Pennsylvania, hereafter cited as “Trial Notes of Scribe B.”

⁷“Trial Notes of Scribe B,” and “Trial Notes of Scribe A”; see also, “For Sale,” *Susquehanna County Herald*, September 8, 1821, 30.

⁸George Peck, *The Life and Times of Rev. George Peck* (New York: Nelson and

Betsey.⁹ She could sign her own name in a careful, practiced hand, and her neighbors found her an intelligent, enjoyable conversationalist.¹⁰ But she remained firmly in the shadows of her husband.

Joseph Smith left no record of what he thought of the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale farm and recently expanded home when he first encountered them at age nineteen. But his response to their home may not have been quite as exuberant as was his mother’s when she visited it three years later, since she was more attuned to its elaborate character and what it did for one’s place in the community. Ever bent on elevating the situation of her family, Lucy gushed about the Hale home in a later reminiscence when she noted “the ma[n]sion in which they lived [was] a large neatly finished frame with <every> convenient appendage necessary.” Their mansion, she recalled, was “pleasantly situated,” and it stood on “an extensive and well cultivated farm.”¹¹ Not only did they live in a home full of comforts, according to Lucy, but she seemed to believe their circumstances added to their moral standing. She noted they were “a lovely intelligent and highly respectable Family,” and their home and farm “did honor to the good taste of the intelligent proprie<tor>.”¹² The Hale domicile fit into a class of homes described by Early American historian Richard Bushman as “middling mansions.”¹³ Their recently expanded home helped give the Hale family a level of vernacular gentility that had recently found its way into the remote valleys of the Endless Mountains. It was built during a time of spiritual renewal for the Hale family, and it had become an outward sign for them of

Phillips, 1873), 68; “Trial Notes of Scribe A.” Peck also referred to Isaac as “old Brother Hale,” George Peck, *Early Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828* (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1860), 256.

⁹All of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale’s sons, except Reuben, had a daughter named either Elizabeth or Betsey. None of the daughters named a child after their mother, although two of Emma’s sisters, Elizabeth and Tryal, named a daughter Emma.

¹⁰Emily C. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, from a Period Preceding its Settlement to Recent Times* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1873), 103.

¹¹Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 430.

¹²Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 430.

¹³Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 115.

what they were hoping to develop described as “an inward grace.”¹⁴

Joseph Jr. first met Isaac and Elizabeth Hale’s third daughter in their comfortable home. “Twas there that I first saw my wife,” he recalled.¹⁵ This daughter, named Emma but called Emmy by her friends, was described by a neighbor as “a pretty woman; as pretty a woman as I ever saw.”¹⁶ She was eighteen months older than Joseph, and although the Hales had another daughter also living in the house, blue-eyed and fair skinned Tryal Hale who was a little less than a year younger than Joseph, the young man was drawn to brown-eyed, dark haired, olive complexioned, and noticeably intelligent Emma. He “immediately commenced paying his addresses to her.”¹⁷ Emma’s parents saw in her the same example of grace, refinement, and gentility they hoped their home could give.

Joseph courted Emma Hale while she lived in her parents’ home, and he hoped to marry her in its parlor, as was custom in the valley. But her father “would not suffer us to be married at his house,” Joseph noted. This meant Joseph was “under the necessity of taking her elsewhere.”¹⁸ Not long

¹⁴See Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, especially xii.

¹⁵Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Paper; Histories, Volume 1: 1832–1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 236 (hereafter *JSP*, H1).

¹⁶Various sources spell Emma’s nickname differently, including Emmy, Emey, and Emy. I have selected the standard spelling for use here, see Sarah M. Kimball, letter to Marinda Hyde, January 2, 1848, Marinda Hyde Papers 1838–1849, CHL; Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, October 27, 1839, (rough book), CHL; and Oliver Cowdery, Diary and Nauvoo High Council Minutes (fair copy), 27–28, CHL. Lorenzo Saunders, interview by William H. Kelly, September 17, 1884, E. L. Kelley Papers, Community of Christ Library and Archives, Independence, Missouri, hereafter CCA, cited in Dan Vogel, “William D. Purple Reminiscence, April 28, 1877,” *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:132.

¹⁷Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 361; an unidentified interviewer who signed his notes as “Abel,” recorded an interview with one of Emma’s sons, David Hyrum Smith, and wrote down David’s description of his mother as, “a little over medium high . . . having long smooth black hair, large clear brown eyes, nose rendered slightly roman by some accident in youth, mouth denoting firmness and decision of character. Considered by many as very handsome, though the only standard to which she aspired, was to be called good looking.” Abel, “Scraps of History, April 12, 1867,” David H. Smith Documents and Reference, CCA.

¹⁸*JSP*, H1: 236–37.

after Joseph married Emma, however, the two lived briefly in the home as Joseph began his work and prepared to move into his own home. Joseph began his first efforts translating the Book of Mormon in the Hale home and found protection as he began his work. Understanding the physical setting of the Hale farm and its mansion, helps us to not only better place the events of 1825–1830 Mormonism within their physical and cultural setting, but also enlarges our appreciation of the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale family.

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale Move from Vermont to Pennsylvania

The Move from Connecticut to Vermont and Back

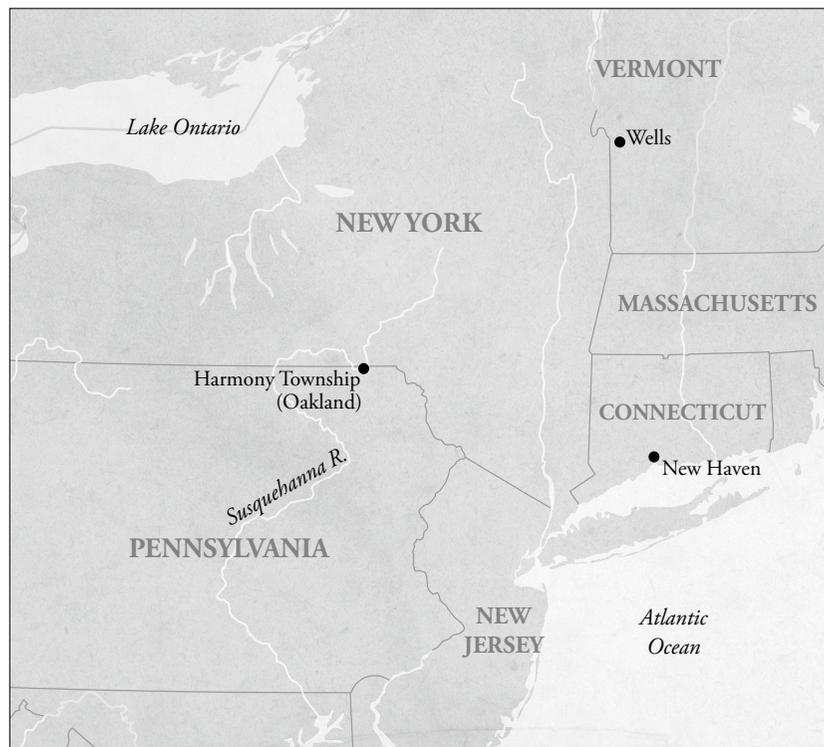
The Hale farm began with Isaac Hale. He was born March 21, 1763, in New Haven, Connecticut, to Diantha Ward and Reuben Hale. After his mother died and his father remarried, Hale joined his maternal grandparents Phebe and “the enterprising Arah Ward, mill-builder and pioneer,” in Waterbury, Connecticut. Arah began to build a second, larger home until the dam to his mill gave out and destroyed his home and livelihood. Along with their sons (and Hale’s uncles) David and John Ward, Arah and Phebe Ward took ten-year-old Isaac and set out on a 176-mile journey to establish a new life in Wells, Vermont, where Arah purchased a mill site in July 1773. The following summer the Wards donated ten acres for a Congregational church, and David Ward served as the Reverend.¹⁹ William Cowdery Sr. (whose grandson Oliver was born in Wells) became the deacon in their church.²⁰

Isaac helped his grandfather build a gristmill in Wells and run it until the Revolutionary War transformed their community. He was only twelve

¹⁹Wells Town Clerk, Land Records, A: 23. This is the same denomination the family belonged to while living in Connecticut. W. C. Sharpe, *History of Oxford*, (Seymour, Connecticut: Record Print, 1885), 12. While living in Connecticut, Arah Ward joined thirty-two others in 1757 who petitioned the church to not require his family to attend meetings during the winter months because of difficult travel on bad roads, Joseph Anderson, *The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut* 3 vols., (New Haven: The Price & Lee Company, 1896), 1:398.

²⁰Mary Bryant Alverson Mehling, *Cowdery-Cowdery-Cowdray Genealogy: William Cowdery of Lynn, Massachusetts, 1630, and His Descendants* (n.p.: Frank Allaben Genealogical, 1911), 79.

when news arrived of the first skirmish on the Lexington Green in Massachusetts. In 1777 fifty-nine-year-old grandfather Ward was killed at Addison, Vermont, while fighting against General Burgoyne and a large Native American force that had mostly come from the Susquehanna Valley in northern Pennsylvania after 1,200 American soldiers burned their villages and massacred their families.²¹ In 1780, when Hale was seventeen, he enlisted, along with his uncle David, to fight under Colonel Ebenezer Allen's command as they sought to prevent Canadian military raids into the Mohawk Valley. Hale's brief tour of duty ended eight days after his enlistment when the younger soldiers returned home without seeing action and the



Hale family geographical origins. Map by Brandon S. Plewe.

²¹See <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=brendablack&id=11806>, accessed November 5, 2014, for possible details on Ward family history.

seventeen-year-old private was released from service.²²

After Hale returned home from military service, he inherited all of his grandfather's estate with the stipulation that he was to take "into his Care his Grandmother Phebe Ward in her old age, to keep and provide for during her life, to free her from all or any cost to this State."²³ Despite the presence of his uncles, Hale inherited both the property and responsibilities of a son.²⁴ His new role suggests how much he had become a "Ward" rather than a "Hale" in both outlook and position. Isaac's grandmother may not have lived long afterward, however, or others agreed to take over responsibility for her care, since in 1784 Hale deeded the property earmarked for her care to his uncle David Ward, and he left for Connecticut.²⁵ Hale may have returned to his birthplace to reconnect with the rest of his Ward relatives, particularly his uncles and aunts Jesse and Eunice Ward Cady and Daniel and Tryal Ward Curtis, since he later named two of his children Jesse and Tryal. He may have also visited his father, Reuben Hale, or older brother, Reuben Hale Jr., both veterans of the recent war, or with his sisters Naomi and Antha (Diantha) Hale. They all still lived in the area along with stepsisters.²⁶ Despite a possible visit with his Hale family, however, they

²²Jacob C. Ullery, *Men of Vermont: An Illustrated Biographical History of Vermonters and Sons of Vermont* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Transcript Publishing Company, 1894), 53–54; John E. Goodrich, ed., *The State of Vermont: Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War 1775 to 1783* (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Co., 1904), 208–09.

²³Wells Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1732–2005, Wells, Vermont, Family Search, accessed 2008, <http://FamilySearch.org>.

²⁴Jane C. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home, 1760–1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 63.

²⁵Wells Town Clerk, Land Records, F:9.

²⁶Anderson, *Ancestry and Posterity of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale*, 1:131, 399, 463, 580, 711; Correll H. Tiffany, comp., "West Hartland, Conn.: A Documentary History of Her Homesteads, 1760–1916," unpublished manuscript, Connecticut State Library; Sharpe, *History of Oxford*, 14; Henry P. Johnston, ed., *The Record of Connecticut Men in the Military and Naval Service During the War of the Revolution, 1775–1783* (Hartford, Conn.: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889), 326, 364, 643. Twenty-three year old Antha Hale married twenty-four year old Joseph Wallace, and Isaac may have attended the wedding on his way north to propose and arrange his own marriage. Joseph Wallace, an African-American, traveled with Isaac's sister to Enfield, Connecticut, so Elam Potter could marry Antha and Joseph on June 23, 1789. Such marriages were rare and a similar union of a white woman in Boston to a black man made national

never connected or maintained long-term ties. Four of Isaac's children were named after his Ward relatives, an additional three were named after Elizabeth's Lewis family, and the youngest child, their son Reuben, was more likely named after Elizabeth's brother Reuben Lewis than Isaac's brother Reuben Hale. The only child of Isaac and Elizabeth that did not inherit the name of a family member was one of their daughters, Emma, who was born when her parents had a special relationship with a prominent family within the American gentry who may have influenced the name selection.

The Move West

In 1785, Isaac Hale stepped into the headquarters of the Susquehanna Land Company. Land speculators there aggressively promoted property along the Susquehanna River, advertising as far away as Germany seeking young, ambitious settlers to buy their land. By the time Hale entered their office, potential clients in the region knew of troubles with Susquehanna property deeds. The Susquehanna Land Company bought its land from Connecticut, but Pennsylvania also claimed ownership and bloody skirmishes—the Pennamite Wars—erupted between “Yankee” and “Pennsylvania” settlers, and the most recent conflict was still not fully resolved. Vermont war hero Ethan Allen, who helped create Vermont from New York and New Hampshire, had agreed in late 1785 to travel there the following spring with a detachment of Green Mountain boys and create a new state

news, *Painesville Telegraph*, June 15, 1827, 3; June 4, 1823, 3; March 11, 1824, 3. The Hale and Wallace wedding was likely a quiet affair because they did not mention race in the legally required public notice for the marriage on May 24, 1789. Lyman H. Bagg, “Marriages in West Springfield, Mass.” *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, July 1881, 232. For additional documentation of the Hale and Wallace wedding, see “Marriage Record of Antha Hale and Joseph Wallace,” Enfield, Connecticut Town Records, 1682–1854, Enfield, Connecticut, June 23, 1789; Francis Olcott Allen, *The History of Enfield, Connecticut* (Lancaster, Pa.: The Wickersham Printing Co., 1900), 2:1786. The Reverend Elam Potter had grown up in the same villages as the Hale family, and he was an ardent abolitionist. It was Potter's congregation during Isaac's childhood that Jonathan Edwards had tried to call to repentance when he preached his famous sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” The sermon had not taken then, and the congregation had not adopted Edward's conservative stance when Joseph and Antha were married, but the Reverend Potter still had gone too far when he married a black man and a white woman. He was defrocked shortly afterward. F. Russell Meyer, *The Reverend Elam Potter* (Enfield, Conn.: Enfield Congregational Church, 2002).

from the land.²⁷ Although Allen never followed through, Hale may have become caught up in this Vermont enthusiasm. Whatever the ultimate motivation for Hale's decision to ignore the controversy, “after having worked one summer in Connecticut, he concluded to try ‘the West.’”²⁸

Hale traveled from Connecticut along the newly opened turnpike to southwestern New York until he arrived at Ouaquaga village or “Old Oquago,” which straddled the Susquehanna River four miles south of what would eventually become Colesville, New York.²⁹ Major General John Sullivan's soldiers had already burned Ouaquaga to the ground and massacred hundreds of Onondaga tribal members and recently settled Tuscarora families before Hale arrived, leaving corn in the fields, apples in the orchards, and tools scattered about the ground. Some of the survivors of this massacre fled north to Canada and fought for the British in Vermont.

Among the ruins, Hale met Daniel Buck, an army surgeon and officer during the recent war. Major Buck's father had placed him with the Onondaga people when only eleven years old to learn their language. This was part of the evangelist Jonathan Edwards' strategy to rear missionaries prepared from their youth to take Christianity to Indian villages in southwestern New York and northern Pennsylvania, and Buck lived with the Onondaga, or “People of the Hills,” for ten years before the start of the war. “He was considered one of them but not in all things.”³⁰

One day Buck tried to follow some of the Onondaga men south as they slipped away to gather salt at a hidden spring. As he entered into a valley where the river turned and headed west, Buck was caught by the Onondaga men he followed and his life threatened. This ended his attempt to

²⁷League of Women Voters, *This is Luzerne County* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.: League of Women Voters, 1963), 14.

²⁸Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 102.

²⁹J. B. Wilkinson, *The Annals of Binghamton, and of the Country Connected with it, from the Earliest Settlement*, (Binghamton, New York: Cooke & Davis, Printers, 1840), 107–119; Marjory B. Hinman and Maurice R. Hitt Jr., eds., *The Letters and Diaries of William Macchure: Surveyor and Pioneer, 1725–1826* (Binghamton, New York: The Broome County Historical Society, 1994) includes numerous references to ‘Quaga throughout. For additional background see Francis Whiting Halsey, *The Old New York Frontier* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 28.

³⁰Letter from J. B. Buck to Emily Blackman as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 495.

find their salt source, but he was certain it was in the valley at the bend of the river about two miles below the New York State line. Buck was avidly interested in finding salt mines or springs essential to hunters preserving and shipping meat downriver, and his travels in the area gave him a rare familiarity with a region little understood by outsiders.³¹

Early map makers of the region acknowledged their lack of information about the area by writing “Endless Mountains” across a large section of unmapped land without trying to include details they did not know.³² The name stuck and is still used for the region today. It drew from the King James Bible’s phrasing of a blessing given by Jacob to his son Joseph promising him blessings “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills” (Genesis 49:26). Among Joseph’s blessings, he was promised, “the chief things of the ancient mountains,” and “the precious things of the lasting hills” (Deuteronomy 33:13–17). These were the things Buck hoped to discover.

As the foliage colors warmed and deepened, Hale joined his efforts with Buck at Ouaquaga where he hunted for meat while Buck gathered frost-bitten corn growing unattended in the fields. He ground it for cornbread using an abandoned mortar and its companion pestle.³³ Since Buck had a young family, including his small son Ichabod whom he had brought with him to the village, Hale must have been of considerable assistance.³⁴ Buck and Hale interacted with the survey team active in the area and knew the land was surveyed and legally available.³⁵ But shortly after becoming associates, the two men traveled south together over the New York border into the valley where Buck thought there was salt and where contested land

³¹Letter from J. B. Buck to Emily Blackman as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 495. Blackman noted that the region is filled with sources of salt, Emily Blackman, “Susquehanna County,” in William H. Egle, ed., *An Illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: De Witt C. Goodrich & Co., 1876), 1019.

³²See, for example, H. Moll, “A New Map of the North Parts of America Claimed by France, 1720,” Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

³³David Hale as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

³⁴Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 57.

³⁵Major Buck still lived in the village July 13, 1787, when William Macclure wrote General James Clinton about a survey of the area and the desire of local men to purchase land nearby, Hinman and Hitt, *The Letters and Diaries of William Macclure*, 11–12.

claimed by the Susquehanna Land Company was inexpensive.

The Susquehanna Valley

Without a turnpike heading south from Ouaquaga, Buck and Hale took the Warrior Path, a narrow trail that followed the river south fifteen miles, and then turned west still following the river as it made a great bend through a narrow, crescent-shaped valley roughly 2,000 feet wide—typically leaving just enough fertile land for thin farms on the north side of its banks—and running for less than thirteen miles before the river turned north and entered New York again. The Warrior Path was a major travel route created by Native Americans on foot as war parties moved rapidly through the region to control territory of interest to competing tribes active in the beaver fur trade.³⁶ It also led to hunting grounds along the river’s tributaries.

The valley was essentially a hunting preserve, but there was a small settlement on the east end near where three apple trees stood that “formed the rallying point and headquarters of all the Indians in the neighborhood. As early as 1779 these trees bore the marks of great age.”³⁷ It was here at those trees that some of Sullivan’s soldiers gathered to plan their raids on the nearby villages near “traces of an Indian village” on the north side of the river where Josiah Stowell’s workmen would later look for a lost silver mine east of what would become the Hale property.³⁸ The rest of the valley had small campsites built along the trail hidden from view for use by hunting or trapping parties making their way through there.³⁹

Early settlers referred to the place where the river entered Pennsylvania as the “east bend” and where it returned into New York as the “west bend,” while the entire river as it passed through the valley was the “great bend.”⁴⁰ Although the valley remains officially unnamed, early residents along this great bend called it the Susquehanna Valley.⁴¹ During the twen-

³⁶Nina M. Versaggi, Director, Public Archaeology Facility, Binghamton University, personal communication to author, September 13, 2013.

³⁷James T. Dubois and William J. Pike, *The Centennial of Susquehanna County* (Washington, D.C.: Gray and Carlkson, Printers, 1888), 72.

³⁸Dubois and Pike, *Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 73.

³⁹Versaggi, personal communication to author, September 13, 2013.

⁴⁰Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 53.

⁴¹George Peck, a minister who traveled through the valley along the great river bend many times during the first half of the nineteenth century called it

tieth century that name has generally come to refer to a much larger region that includes the entire river drainage system through upper Pennsylvania.

Hanna, *anna*, and *honna* were all English spellings for a word the Onondaga applied to local rivers, brooks, or creeks meaning “stream of water;” and *susque* was the English spelling of a word whose meaning is still debated but may have meant “muddy,” “roiling,” or “serpent like.”⁴² Since the river is rarely muddy except during flooding and is only serpentine when seen from the sky, it may be the Onondaga intended to suggest by Susquehanna the rough, roiling rapids frequently found in the shallow water.

During the earliest settlement period or before, the oldest and most commonly used name for the village where Daniel Buck and Isaac Hale first met, Oquago, was attached to the mountain where Hale settled. The word’s purported meaning of “place of hulled-corn soup” may have had reference to “several pits containing charred corn” Buck and Hale found near the ancient apple trees.⁴³ No matter who named the mountain, that name permanently connected the Hale family and their mountain to the Onandaga people who lived there before.

the Susquehanna Valley, (Peck, *Life and Times*, 455), as did longtime Harmony resident John Comfort. John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, December 24, 1836, Syracuse University Archives, Syracuse, New York. Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 34, called it “valley of the Susquehanna.” And, Chaffee noted of Nathaniel Lewis that “the place where he lived was called Susquehanna,” Amasa Franklin Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1904), 720. In the mid-twentieth century an elderly resident of the valley who had lived there her entire life still referred to it as “the very lovely but quiet Susquehanna River Valley.” Marietta Collwell, letter to Wilford C. Wood, October 18, 1946, Wilford C. Wood Collection, CHL. I have used the early name adopted by the early settlers throughout this history to refer to the valley in the eastern portion of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.

⁴²Isaac A. Chapman, *A Sketch of the History of Wyoming* (Wilkesbarre, Penn.: Sharp D. Lewis, 1830), 173. Mrs. Arthur Webb argued the name meant “crooked river,” but she does not provide a source for her conclusions and writes too late to have worked through a native speaker. Mrs. Arthur Webb. *Susquehanna Cheers 100 Years* (Susquehanna, Penn.: Susquehanna Centennial, Aug. 16–27, 1953), 15.

⁴³Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 102. Blackman notes the pits and places them on the William Smith property, but she never followed the property through the Westfall family to Jacob I. Skinner for her readers, but simply identified the property as Skinner land when she drew her maps of the digging sites. See also, Francis Whiting Halsey, *The Old New York Frontier* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 28.

Settling in Pennsylvania

David Hale, the son of Isaac, expressed some uncertainty as to exactly when his father arrived in the Susquehanna Valley, dating the event to 1787 “or thereabout.”⁴⁴ Buck and Hale were still up river at the Onondaga village in July of that year, but resources were quickly used up, leading them to follow the Warrior Path down river in the last months of that year or first months of the next.⁴⁵ Hale wintered over in the valley, hunting to support himself and probably Daniel Buck’s family. The following spring of 1788 Jonathan Bennett built a log home, and David Hale recalled his father “bought an improvement of Jonathan Bennett.”⁴⁶ Hale first occupied the farm that year, and Bennett settled with his two sons and two sons-in-law on a farm further downriver.⁴⁷ If Bennett sold the land for what he paid for it to get out of a Susquehanna Land Company contract, Hale purchased 150 acres at twenty-five cents an acre.⁴⁸ His log home, if Bennett built one like his father’s, was “constructed of yellow pine logs, hewed, and pointed with lime mortar, and lined on the inside.”⁴⁹ Lime mortar was difficult to get in that remote area, however, and so the Hale home was probably mud chinked. In 1788 more white settlers came to the valley where Hale and

⁴⁴Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

⁴⁵Emily Blackman also suggested that Daniel Buck arrived in the valley in 1787, Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 53. Buck and Hale had left the Oquago Valley before it was settled, and J. B. Wilkinson dated the initial settlement of that valley to 1788, (Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 110–112).

⁴⁶Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 101, 103. Although Blackman notes that Daniel Buck came into the valley in 1787 and David Hale recalled his father had come into the valley in 1787 “or thereabout,” Blackman placed the construction of the Bennett log home to 1788, either the log home was built in 1787 when Hale arrived and Blackman had an incorrect date, or Bennett built the home specifically for Hale the following spring. I have accepted the date as Blackman gives it, assuming Hale remained in the valley through the winter.

⁴⁷Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 53; Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 102. Bennett became a blacksmith in Great Bend Township, “Tax Assessments, Great Bend Township, 1825,” Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

⁴⁸Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 35.

⁴⁹George Peck, *Wyoming: It’s History, Stirring Incidents, and Romantic Adventures* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1858), 193.

Buck first met, and Daniel Buck became their first minister.⁵⁰ He also established a congregation in the Susquehanna Valley where the Hale family and their Lewis in-laws attended his services.⁵¹ Jonathan Bennett served as the deacon of the congregation.⁵²

Daniel Buck's Congregational churches became the foundation of the religious community in the region. After several decades his congregations became Presbyterians, and these Presbyterians continued to play an active role in community affairs. They also developed a close relationship and identification with local Native Americans, perhaps in part because of Daniel Buck's knowledge of their language and culture.

A local member of the Presbyterian congregation Zachariah Tarble was named after his uncle Zachariah who was captured by Indians as a young boy, along with a brother and sister, and taken into Canada where he became a Mohawk chief—a source of family pride.⁵³ The younger Zachariah Tarble became a local Justice of the Peace and performed the marriage of Emma Hale and Joseph Smith Jr. His cousin Thomas Tarble married

⁵⁰Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 107–08.

⁵¹Register of Baptisms, January 11, 1797, First Presbyterian Church Records, Hallstead, Pennsylvania, Susquehanna County Historical Society; see also Lawrence Bothwell, ed., *The Journals of Seth Williston, 1796–1800*, (Binghamton, NY: Broome County Historical Society, 1992), 108–09.

⁵²Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 102.

⁵³While the name of the local Justice of the Peace is sometimes spelled Zacheriah Tarbell, his name is most frequently spelled Zachariah Tarble. This was the spelling used by Zachariah while he lived in Chenango County. His headstone reads Zachariah Tarble, contemporary property deeds use that spelling, as do local histories, e.g. Ausburn Towner, *Our County and Its People: A History of the Valley and County of Chemung, From the Closing Years of the Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1892), 466; and Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chemung and Schuyler Counties, N.Y. for 1868–1869* (Syracuse: Journal Office, 1868), 107. In Harmony Township tax records, Daniel's name is recorded as “Daniel Tarbill,” see “1820 Tax Assessment.” Zachariah Tarble's descendants today spell their name Tarbell, Rupert Tarbell, Family Historian, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, personal communication to author, July 18, 2013, which appears to be an older and more consistent form, see Jack A. Frisch, “TARBELL, JOHN,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, University of Toronto, accessed July 6, 2013, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tarbell_john_3E.html.

Daniel Buck's daughter Mary and worked on Abel Stowell's farm.⁵⁴

Elizabeth Lewis: Background

After Isaac Hale established a farm, he returned to Wells to marry Elizabeth Lewis. Both Isaac and Elizabeth's families came from the villages of New Haven County in Connecticut before settling in Vermont, which may have contributed to an emotional bond between the two. Isaac later described Elizabeth as “my esteemed friend and wife of my youth.”⁵⁵ His perspective of husband and wife relationships is suggested in later trial testimony where Isaac recalled a neighbor had asked if he could “borrow a canoe to carry his wife and children down to Munsons [Tavern] where his wifes mother lived.” Hale responded, “I told him [the] canoe was not fit to carry women in.”⁵⁶ Hale also shared the view of his contemporaries that a prospective husband needed to have a home and property prepared for his prospective bride to set up house before he could marry her.⁵⁷ When Isaac left Vermont, Elizabeth was barely thirteen. Six years had passed since then. There was not time for courting between Hale's return to Vermont and his marriage, and so during the six years he was away, he must have courted through correspondence. But the details of this courtship are not known.

When Isaac Hale was a young boy in New Haven, Connecticut, he was raised in a culture that promoted the search for gold. Even the elite where Isaac lived as a boy put resources into discovering precious metal. Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale College, lived near both Isaac's maternal and paternal families when he recorded in his diary gossip he heard from Governor Trumbull, who, he believed, received it directly from governor John Winthrop the Younger himself, how Winthrop had found “plenty of Gold” in a secret gold mine in the nearby mountains and had made a gold ring

⁵⁴Thomas and Mary Buck Tarble became part of the same Presbyterian community near Ouaquaga village where Josiah Stowell served as a deacon. After her husband Thomas was killed in an accident and buried on Abel Stowell's farm, Mary moved to father-in-law John S. Tarbele's home a little south of the Hale family. This Presbyterian Tarble family remained friends with the Hales, Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 120.

⁵⁵“Last Will and Testament of Isaac Hale,” Susquehanna County, Pa., Wills and Administrations, 1812–1921, December 23, 1838, 1:212–13.

⁵⁶“Trial Notes of Scribe A.”

⁵⁷Jane C. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home, 1760–1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 54–65.

he showed off to his friends. Stiles looked for Winthrop's mine, but he only found and recorded what he believed was Hebrew writing chiseled into the rock above a suspected site by a couple of Jewish prospectors. Stiles also questioned traveling Native American bands about "Spanish gold mines" he heard existed along the Missouri River although nothing developed from it.⁵⁸ Because Stiles never found the Spanish mines or Winthrop's hidden source of gold, historians assumed his journal recorded a string of idle gossip and simply reflected the "folk beliefs" of the area. When a mine was accidentally discovered in 1985 in the same hills where Stiles thought it was located, the *New York Times* described it as "one of the richest concentrations of gold in North America."⁵⁹ What was thought to be idle gossip gathered by Stiles apparently was based on accurate information corrupted in the retelling.

While the early treasure lore Stiles collected may have been more accurate than much of the gossip about treasure typically shared during the period, his own search for and failure to find any gold was unremarkably average. Governors, academic leaders, businessmen, country farmers, and poor day laborers were all equally interested in finding hidden wealth in late eighteenth-century America and were equally disappointed in their failure to find anything of value.

British law encouraged prospectors to look anywhere for ore they chose as long as it did not disrupt "Houses, Orchards, Gardens, and Enclosures of Sugarworks." The only other requirement of the law was that the finder pay a tax of one-sixth of any ore discovered.⁶⁰ A loophole allowed for the tax-free discovery of buried coins, watches, jewelry, bars of metal, or other items not considered "ore." The science of geology was not well developed at the time, and a folk treasure hunting tradition was imported from Europe and refined over more than two centuries that relied on supernatural means to find buried minerals and valuables.⁶¹ Prayer was also

⁵⁸Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 3:264, 266, 368, 488.

⁵⁹Amy Wallace, "Gold Lures Geologists to Connecticut," *The New York Times*, July 8, 1986, accessed April 10, 2015, www.nytimes.com/1986/07/08/science/gold-lures-geologists-to-connecticut.html.

⁶⁰Thomas Houghton, *Royal Institutions: Being Proposals for Articles to Establish and Confirm Laws, Liberties, and Customs of Silver and Gold Mines to All the King's Subjects* (London: Daniel Poplar, 1694), A2–3, 6–8.

⁶¹Ronald W. Walker, "The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting,"

frequently used then as it is today in the search for lost things.

While the Spanish had discovered or appropriated gold and silver mines in Peru and other places in South America, the British had not been as successful, and so they turned to the more common way of getting gold—taking it from others. They most frequently got it from Spanish treasure ships.

Isaac's eventual father-in-law, Nathaniel Lewis, also lived in the area and was drawn into one of these searches. As "a native of Cape Cod" and a "South Sea man," born to Mary and Gershom Lewis in Guilford, Connecticut, Nathaniel Lewis grew up in shipping and worked for a time as a sailor. He also lived on the Connecticut coast within view of Gardiner's Island where Captain William Kidd purportedly buried stolen silver before moving to Block Island to negotiate his surrender for piracy. Kidd's surrender put the entire coast in an uproar when the constables arrested him penniless and found less than 100,000 pounds sterling hidden with his friends for safekeeping. The public was sure he had four or five times that amount.⁶² Conversation in many country taverns centered on Kidd's treasure and where it might be located and finding the hidden horde became a popular pastime. Some thought it might not have been buried on Block Island but on the nearby Thimble Islands just off the coast from Nathaniel Lewis's childhood home and a few hundred feet from the much smaller Lewis Island. Despite a thorough search through the years of the islands in the vicinity, no one found Kidd's silver.

Others speculated the silver may not have been buried on islands off Connecticut, but elsewhere in the country. Robert Quarry, a new customs collector for Pennsylvania, captured two of Captain Kidd's seadogs inland in Pennsylvania's interior and spread the alarm that Kidd's ship had been near the Pennsylvania coast. Quarry was responsible for capturing smugglers, but this time he was convinced the men he captured were not just smuggling goods into Pennsylvania but had taken a detour somewhere to

BYU Studies 24, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 449–50. See also, Mark Ashurst-McGee, "A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junior as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet," (master's thesis, Utah State University, 2000); Dan Vogel, "The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests," *Dialogue* 27 (Fall 1994): 204–07.

⁶²Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 168, 173, 229–32.

bury Kidd's famous treasure in its mountains.⁶³ Where, he did not know. Adding to the Quarry speculation, Morgan Miles, a sailor arrested and taken to London to be tried for piracy, announced his captain, a man named Stratton, had buried a cache of silver at the mouth of the Susquehanna River before returning to England.⁶⁴ These stories spread and were embellished with each new telling until there was a general perception that most pirates buried treasure, a perception that worked its way into fictional narratives largely unchallenged for centuries despite the lack of evidence.

As Nathaniel Lewis matured, he grew up in a Connecticut full of these stories. During the French and Indian War, he enlisted in New Haven, Connecticut, on March 22, 1762, in the 2nd Regiment 9th Company to fight under Captain Archibald McNeil who took part of his regiment to Havana, Cuba, to avenge Spanish involvement in the conflict. McNeil decided to head for Havana rather than fight local hostiles because Havana was "reputedly rich in booty."⁶⁵ The men captured ships and scoured the Caribbean in search of treasure, but when Havana fell in July 1762, and the hoped for treasure never materialized, McNeil's Yankees sailed home with their only gold the amber skin of a sick and dying crew as a precursor to a serious yellow fever epidemic.⁶⁶ McNeil remained undeterred and his family established a shipping business in the West Indies where McNeil's son later became a pirate, or, as his family remembered it, "a privateer . . . which was then sanctioned by the government."⁶⁷ Nathaniel Lewis reenlisted in the navy at Sea Brook, Connecticut, where he served until July 22, 1763.⁶⁸

⁶³Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, 175.

⁶⁴David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life among the Pirates* (New York: Random House, 1995), 178–79.

⁶⁵David Syrett, ed., *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762* (London: Navy Records Society, 1970), xiii.

⁶⁶Nathaniel Lewis enlisted in the Connecticut 2nd Regiment 9th Company, Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, *Rolls of Connecticut Men in the French and Indian War, 1755–1762*, 344–45; Jacquelyn L. Ricker, ed., and Alvan Talcott, comp., *Families of Guilford, Connecticut*. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1984), 804–05; Lorraine Cook White, ed., *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994–2002), 16:216–17.

⁶⁷Norris Galpin Osborn, *Men of Mark in Connecticut* (Hartford: William R. Goodspeed, 1906), 340.

⁶⁸Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, *Rolls of Connecticut Men*

But after his father, Gershom, died in Litchfield Township October 18, 1766, 27-year-old Nathaniel returned to Guilford to marry Esther Tuttle January 16, 1767. The newlyweds then settled six miles north of Litchfield in Goshen, Connecticut, where their first child was born November 19 or 20, 1767.⁶⁹ They named her Elizabeth Lewis.

Elizabeth spent her early years in the midst of revolutionary sentiment. Her cousins named their son Algernon Sidney Lewis after the English philosopher Algernon Sidney who opposed absolute or divine right monarchy, and the Litchfield area became a central base for operations during the war where the Continental Army could rely on consistent support, store supplies, and keep prisoners of war.

Although Nathaniel Lewis enlisted for two separate terms during the French and Indian war, he enlisted again in 1775 as talk of revolution moved through Connecticut's churches and taverns, and he served in the Continental Navy under Lieutenant David Welch when it was first formed until his enlistment expired on November 10, 1775.⁷⁰ Since the navy was

in the French and Indian War, 1755–1762, 344–345. Lewis reenlisted as part of the 2nd Regiment.

⁶⁹November 19, 1767, is the birthdate given in The Lewis Family Collection, in Rollin Carroll Wynkoop Lewis, *Lewis Family Collection (1550–1984)*, New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, MSS B71, Box 1, Folders I and J. This may have influenced Elizabeth's great-granddaughter Mary Anderson who gave the same date. Other sources give November 20 as the birth date, Lorraine Cook White, ed., *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2002), 23: 140; Grace E. Pember Wood, *A History of the Town of Wells, Vermont from its Settlement with Family and Biographical Sketches and Incidents* (N.p.: N.p., 1955), 86. These sources also disagree as to where Elizabeth was born, but Anderson's claim Elizabeth was born in Litchfield may be because the Lewis property was on the township line, while her family home was on the Goshen side of the line but still in Litchfield County. I have concluded she was born in Goshen on the family property. Lewis, *Lewis Family Collection (1550–1984)*, gives the dates of birth for the children as, Elizabeth, November 19, 1767; Nathaniel, May 27, 1769; John, October 3, 1770; Esther, May 31, 1774; Jekiel, August 20, 1776; Molly, June 9, 1779; Reuben, January 13, 1782; Amos, April 7, 1785. She does not include Levi among the children.

⁷⁰Welch was listed variously as a Lieutenant, Captain, and on his tombstone as a Major. Presumably he was promoted during the war and served in all three positions. Royal R. Hinman, comp., *A Historical Collection from Official Records, Files, &c of the Part Sustained by Connecticut, During the War of the Revolu-*

initially made of up merchantmen, Lewis may have been working in the shipping trade when he enlisted, or he may have presented his earlier navy experience at enlistment.

Elizabeth Lewis and Her Family in Vermont

In early 1776 Nathaniel Lewis transferred his home with its sixteen acres of land by deed to his commanding officer, David Welch, and he took his family north to the Green Mountains.⁷¹ Although the family may have traveled with relatives, Elizabeth Lewis at only eight-years-old still held significant responsibility during the move, helping her expecting mother with her brothers and sister—seven-year-old Nathaniel Jr., five-year-old John, and two-year-old Esther.

When the Lewis family arrived in Vermont, they settled in Wells Township. Although first chartered in 1761 as part of the New Hampshire land grants, the township was only recently organized by members of the Ward family and other local civic leaders. Connecticut investors promoted Wells land; and Connecticut settlers filled its mountain valleys. The Lewis family arrived among the earliest settlers, and they would have spent most of their time clearing land to make it productive. Although a large, level valley in the center of the township became Wells village, the Lewis family settled away from the village on inexpensive land on a rocky mountain top near the northeastern township line. Wells village in the central valley became the center of business in the township, while the northeastern portion of the town where the Lewis family lived did business in the village in neighboring Middletown Township where a booming settlement began to develop. Nathaniel and Esther had four more children as the family struggled to make a living in the hard scrabble of their new settlement. Nathaniel returned to the war briefly as he enlisted a fourth time and served in Vermont.⁷²

Isaac's son David later erroneously claimed his uncle Nathaniel Lewis had served with his father during the Revolutionary War and the two men

tion (Hartford: E. Gleason, 1842), 25, 29. Elwin G. Davis, "Lewises Who Served Their Country," *Lewisiana: The Lewis Letter*, 8(8) 1898: 117; Milton Cemetery Records, The Hale Collection, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut, November 14–16, 1934.

⁷¹Davis, "Lewises Who Served Their Country," 117.

⁷²John E. Goodrich, *The State of Vermont Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, 1775–1783*, (Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1904), 208–09.

together "had heard Ethan Allen swear, and so were not afraid of bears."⁷³ Hale had served under Ebenezer Allen, not the more famous Ethan; and it was David's grandfather Nathaniel Lewis, not his uncle who was then not quite eleven years old, who had enlisted as a private in the army and served for eight days the year following Hale's service.⁷⁴ David's mistaken memory may have been due to his recalling stories of his father's involvement with Ethan Allen in an attempt to create a new state out of northeastern Pennsylvania.

After Nathaniel Lewis Sr.'s brief war service, he built a two-story frame house in the mountains to accommodate his growing family. The Lewis's neighbors considered them "the poorest family in town," and "about 1780 or a little later" when the first traveling Methodist preacher arrived in their region, he asked for the poorest family and the neighbors sent him to the Lewis's door. Nathaniel and Esther Lewis became Wells Township's first converts to Methodism.

After Nathaniel Lewis joined the Methodists, he "preached at his house" where he established "a small class" and became the class leader.⁷⁵ His young son Nathaniel Jr. may have been his first convert. "Nathaniel became interested in preaching at a very young age of eleven and one-half years. His father was the leader of a Methodist class in their home."⁷⁶ Two of young Nathaniel's brothers—John and Levi Lewis—joined several years later and also became heavily involved in Methodism. John soon be-

⁷³Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

⁷⁴Goodrich, *The State of Vermont Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, 1775–1783*, 208–209.

⁷⁵Hiland Paul, *History of Wells, Vermont for the First Century after its Settlement; with Biographical Sketches by Robert Parks, Esq.* (Rutland: Tuttle & Co., 1869), 33; see also, Almon Chandler Hopson, "Wells," *Vermont Historical Magazine*, in Abby Maria Hemenway, ed., *The History of Rutland County, Vermont: Civil, Ecclesiastical, Biographical and Military* (White River Junction, Vt.: White River Paper Co., 1882), 1191.

⁷⁶The age of Nathaniel Lewis Jr.'s interest in preaching seems very specific, which suggests that it may be accurate. It puts his conversion to early 1779, however, which is a year before his parents were supposedly converted. Their conversion date was presented as approximated and if this information is correct it would put their conversion a half year earlier, Stanley and Betty Claxton Coryell, *Skinner Family History* (N.p.: Stanley and Betty Coryell, 2005), 11.

came a minister to an established congregation.⁷⁷ Elizabeth was among the “children” that did not join the Methodists then.⁷⁸ While Elizabeth likely attended meetings with her family, until 1784 none of the Methodist ministers in America had been ordained, and so early converts such as the Lewis family continued to receive the sacraments from ministers of the Congregational Churches in their area. Isaac Hale and Elizabeth Lewis may have attended the same church services.

About this same time, another local citizen, Nathaniel Wood, who lived a little north of the Lewis family, was “excluded from the congregational church,” apparently because he “had gotten up a new system of religious doctrine.”⁷⁹ “In the Wood families, and especially in Nathaniel Wood’s family, were some of the best minds the town ever had.”⁸⁰ And they put their thoughts toward theology. Perhaps because their public discussions of religion differed from what was commonly accepted, their neighbors described them as religious agitators. During this period, the Wood family and some of their neighbors accepted Nathaniel Wood’s religious doctrines, and this growing group began meeting together in Middletown. A key element of their religious activity was the use of divining rods to receive revelation. They introduced a variety of doctrinal innovations through revelation, and they discussed using their rods to find treasure to finance a New Jerusalem.⁸¹ While it is not clear if Wood’s followers identified themselves by a particular name, it may have been something akin to

⁷⁷Paul, *History of Wells*, 33, 37, notes one of the Lewis sons became “an acceptable local preacher” before he mentions the conversion of John and Levi Lewis in 1789. There may have been an additional Lewis son who became a preacher, but John and Nathaniel are the only two known. For details about John Lewis as minister in Harmony, New York, see, “Elder John Lewis,” and “Harmony, Feb. 22, 1826,” Elial T. Foote Papers, Chautauqua County Historical Society; McClurg Museum, Westfield, New York, 2:37 and 26:137.

⁷⁸The early involvement of Elizabeth in Methodism is discussed below.

⁷⁹Barnes Frisbie, *History of Middletown, Vermont* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle & Company, 1867, 59. Wood was excluded from the Congregationalists “some twelve years before,” but the history does not indicate for what. If it was twelve years before his Rodsmen were organized into a congregation then he was excluded about 1788 or a little earlier.

⁸⁰Frisbie, *History of Middletown*, 59.

⁸¹Walker, “The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting,” 449–50.

“modern Israelites or Jews.”⁸² Outsiders called them Rodsmen.

While activities of the Rodsmen climaxed in 1801, the use of rods began in the late 1780s as Nathaniel Jr. approached adulthood and started courting. “A man came, first to Wells, then to Middletown, [and] introduced the hazel rod.”⁸³ A number of these Rodsmen lived in Wells along the township line in the Lewis neighborhood, while most gathered in Middletown where Sarah Cole lived as she and Nathaniel Jr. courted.

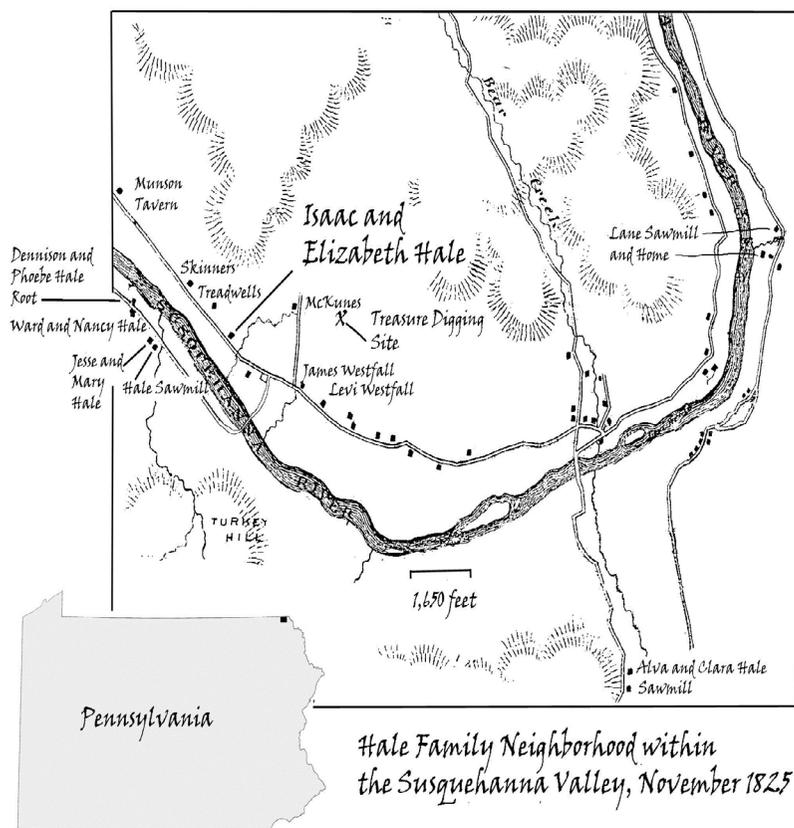
Nathaniel Jr.’s brother John Lewis also met and married a relative of Sarah Cole in Middletown, Rhoda Hall. John and Rhoda married and joined the Methodists in 1789, then moved to Wells village where John became a Methodist preacher.⁸⁴ Levi Lewis, a younger brother, also moved to “the village” where he operated a tannery and served as the Sunday School superintendent.⁸⁵ As John moved from Middletown, Nathaniel Jr. continued to live there until he married Sarah at the Justice of the Peace in Feb-

⁸²Frisbie, *History of Middletown*, 46.

⁸³Frisbie, *History of Middletown*, 58. The early settler’s grandchildren recalled years later how their families “brought with them many of those old Connecticut notions and prejudices,” which shaped their daily activities such as avoiding beginning to plow or plant on a Friday (considered an unlucky day) or making sure the moon was in the right quarter to begin planting to guarantee a good crop. Paul, *History of Wells*, 16–17. Some of the settlers also brought with them their interest in buried treasure and precious ore. The use of witch hazel rods accompanied many families in their move to Vermont. Others were introduced to rod use after arriving. A neighbor of the Lewis family, “Old Mr. Fry,” was among those who brought the practice with him. Levi Fry settled in the low mountains on the northeastern border of Wells Township just east of the Lewis family. One day he was digging alone when Fry “came on to one [treasure] box and he got it out [of the ground], but it was so heavy he could not lift it, so he went for someone to help, and when they returned the box was gone; he supposed the Spaniards [as ghosts] got it,” Paul, *History of Wells*, 81, 90.

⁸⁴Paul, *History of Wells*, 33–34. John led the Methodist congregation in Wells when his first son was born in a “log cabin” in the village in 1801, the same year the Rodsmen movement peaked and then collapsed, “Elder John Lewis,” Elial T. Foote Papers, 2:37; and Paul, *History of Wells*, 119. John Lewis eventually moved to Harmony Township, New York, where he became a Methodist Elder, preacher, and a judge in the county, and his son later served as a member of congress. “Harmony, February 22, 1826,” Elial T. Foote Papers, 26:137; and Paul, *History of Wells*, 119.

⁸⁵Paul, *History of Wells*, 37, 116–17.



Map by Mark L. Staker.

ruary 1790.⁸⁶ Since his family noted Nathaniel Jr. “continuously” preached from the time he was eleven, it is likely Nathaniel preached Methodism in Middletown, but it did not go well as most families remained involved with the Rodsmen and Lewis saw few if any converts. It appears the Lewis men sided with the majority of Methodists that disapproved of divining rod

use.⁸⁷ Nathaniel moved to the Susquehanna in autumn 1790, and whatever existed of the Methodists in Middletown where he had lived quickly dissolved so that when Methodist preacher Laban Clark arrived in the town in 1799, the family of a Mr. Done was “the only Methodist family in the place,” and he was as deeply involved with the Rodsmen as were his neighbors.⁸⁸ Perhaps the only reason Clark felt he could call Mr. Done a Methodist was because he convinced Mrs. Done to destroy her husband’s rod. The rise of the Rodsmen placed Methodists in the community in direct opposition to the local treasure digging culture that had been part of their Connecticut roots.

Isaac Hale was not a Methodist and not exposed to the same rural religious conflicts as has confronted the Lewis family. After Nathaniel Lewis married Sarah Cole, Isaac Hale arrived back in Wells sometime in the summer of 1790. He married Elizabeth Lewis on September 20, 1790, two months before her twenty-third birthday.⁸⁹ Isaac and Elizabeth Hale took Nathaniel and Sarah Lewis, along with Sarah’s mother and her eight-year-old sister, Lurena Cole, and quickly left for Pennsylvania since they would travel over two hundred miles to their new home barely ahead of the winter weather using a small, single ox drawn cart to carry all their goods with those of the family members that accompanied them.⁹⁰ When the Hale

⁸⁷Mark Ashurst-McGee argues that as a result of the success Methodism found in America, religious leaders sought to distance it from folk religious practices such as dowsing in order to make themselves “socially established.” Mark Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought,” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2008), 70; see also Marvin Hill, “Money-Digging Folklore and the Beginnings of Mormonism: An Interpretive Suggestion,” *BYU Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 484–86; and D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 31.

⁸⁸Frisbie, *History of Middletown*, 55–56.

⁸⁹Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 433.

⁹⁰Lurena was born in October 1782 and married Timothy Pickering III in the Susquehanna Valley in 1801. Pickering family correspondence notes Lurena’s mother lived with her in the Susquehanna Valley but would return to her sons in Vermont when Lurena left for Massachusetts. It is unlikely Lurena and her mother traveled in the wilderness to Pennsylvania without support; and they had to have traveled with the Hale and Lewis families. David Hale implies this in his account of his parent’s immigration to the valley when he mentions Lurena Cole (as Lora-

⁸⁶Stanley and Betty Coryell, *Skinner Family History*, 11.

and Lewis families arrived in the Susquehanna Valley, winter had already arrived and the struggle for survival began. Nathaniel Lewis brought with him negative experiences with the Rodsmen and treasure digging culture, Isaac Hale arrived in Pennsylvania without the same conflict with his Connecticut roots.⁹¹

The Hale Farm

“Uncle Nate,” Isaac’s brother-in-law Nathaniel Lewis, and Nathaniel’s wife Sarah, squatted on a farm immediately west of the Hales on the north bank of the Susquehanna River ascending the foot of Oquago Mountain. The Hale and Lewis families began to make themselves comfortable on this land as the early settlers cut timber along the river floodplain that could easily be floated downstream to market without special equipment turning the bottomlands into rich garden loam. As the family worked, Connecticut and Pennsylvania soon resolved their competing land claims, and on April 4, 1789, the state of Pennsylvania sold the Hale and Lewis farms to George

na Cole) in the context of his discussion of his parent’s immigration but does not specifically say she joined them. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

⁹¹Isaac Hale was not a Methodist during his residence in Vermont and appears to have been involved in treasure digging in Harmony, Pennsylvania. See Emily Blackman, draft version of *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, Susquehanna County Historical Association, Montrose, Pennsylvania. But he is never mentioned in later accounts of Rodsmen activity. Nancy F. Glass was asked specifically to respond to accusations Oliver Cowdery had been involved in the group. She was the same age as Oliver Cowdery’s older brother Warren and could name some of the individuals involved with the Rodsmen but was uncertain of Cowdery family involvement. “If anyone was engaged in it [the Rodsmen’s treasure digging activities], it must have been the old gentleman,” Oliver Cowdery’s father, she surmised. Paul, *History of Wells*, 81. While the group developed and disappeared before Oliver Cowdery’s birth, since he was later gifted in working a “sprout” or “rod,” his father or other later associates of his may have been involved and shared a knowledge of using divining rods with him. It is also possible he drew from the general folk culture of New England and learned how to use a rod to receive revelation elsewhere. Isaac Hale may have also gotten his interest elsewhere rather than in Wells since the practice was so widespread in America at the time. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 1:15.



Stone hoe used by Onandaga women to grow corn, found on Hale Farm. Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

Ruper as part of a large tract of land that included much of the valley.⁹² Pennsylvania separated the valley from Tioga Township in March 1791, and made the entire valley Willingborough Township, a part of Luzerne County.⁹³ As Isaac and Elizabeth Hale settled in Willingborough Township, Ruper sold most of his land to Tench Francis, a merchant in Philadelphia, who became their new landlord. The property boundary on the eastern line of the Lewis property and the western line of the Hale property cut through a Native American camp where a small band cooked food and made arrowheads. A hoe found at the site suggests it may have been more than simply a hunting camp since women worked there too. These artifacts were in the upper layer of the topsoil and Isaac Hale likely knew of an earlier Native American presence on his property.⁹⁴

⁹²Robert H. Rose to Isaac Hale, Deeds, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, 11:444.

⁹³Susquehanna County, “Township Incorporations, 1790 to 1853,” Susquehanna County Historical Society, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

⁹⁴“Aaronic Priesthood Restoration Monument Site Improvements: Hale Pre-contact Site and McKune Barn Site,” Rensselaer, New York: Hartgen Archeolog-



Onondaga pottery, found on Hale Farm, Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

Near Ouaquaga village where Daniel Buck and Isaac Hale first lived, the new settlers developed an intense interest in buried wealth. When Doctor Richard Shuckburgh, Captain Borrow, and Silas Swart, some of the first white men to travel through the Susquehanna Valley, came through that region in 1734 under orders from the governor to search for mines, Shuckburgh looked over the region “like stout Cortez” hoping to find precious ore, but after he could not get local tribal leaders to share information

ical Associates, Inc, May 2012. Report filed in the Historic Sites Files, Historic Sites Division, LDS Church History Department. During trial testimony, Isaac Hale mentioned walking this specific site barefoot as he took a group of angry neighbors over to the Treadwell home east of his property to confront a member of the family, “Trial Notes of Scribe B.”

with him he left, still certain they were hiding something.⁹⁵ Shuckburgh is credited by many with later writing the words to the song Yankee Doodle, which if correct is somewhat ironic since the tune for Yankee Doodle was used for a song in the first American comic opera *The Disappointment* that lampooned a Philadelphia merchant obsessed with buried pirate treasure.⁹⁶

After Shuckburgh traveled through the Susquehanna Valley, settlers began to move into the mountains. Among them was a man named Josiah Stow, a deacon in Daniel Buck’s congregation, where Josiah Stowell would later also serve as a deacon. (The similarities in name, location, and activities can easily lead to confusion between the two men.) Stow settled on the outskirts of the Old Oquago village where Buck and Hale first met. Major Stow, shared the same military rank as Buck, and had consistent interaction with him. Stow recalled that as he began plowing he turned up numerous Indian burials that included “trinkets” of silver among which were the many silver nose pendants and silver ear disks worn by the earlier inhabitants.⁹⁷ These silver artifacts were a distinctive element of traditional Onondaga dress. The daughter of Stow’s neighbor Elmore Russell found a large ring on her family’s property “supposed to have been once the ornament of some chief’s daughter.” It was later tested and shown to be “pure gold.”⁹⁸ George Catlin, who grew up in the same valley and went on to become a famous painter of Native Americans in traditional dress, recalled his own father’s experiences: “The plows in my father’s field were daily turning up Indian skulls or Indian bones, and Indian flint arrow-heads.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵John D. Monroe, *Chapters in the History of Delaware County, New York* (Delaware County Historical Association, 1949), 6–7.

⁹⁶Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 50–51, 148. The tune existed in American folklife earlier than the comic opera and may have made its way to Shuckburgh through another source, but the connection of the two would have been apparent to many Pennsylvanians.

⁹⁷Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 108.

⁹⁸Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 116–17.

⁹⁹George Catlin, *Last Rambles Amongst the Indians of the Rocky Mountains and the Andes* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1867), 9–10. Several members of the Catlin family joined the Methodists and were active in the same congregations where Nathaniel Lewis preached and the Hale family attended. Marjorie Catlin Roehm, *The Letters of George Catlin and His Family: A Chronicle of the Ameri-*



Onondaga projectile points, found on Hale Farm, Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

These grave goods may have encouraged the locals to look for raw ore on their property as well. The Onondaga and Oneida tribes had carried out extensive trade in beaver pelts for silver jewelry and other items from 1780–1821, and had become skilled silversmiths of their own work. They made nose pendants, ear plugs, gorgets, and crucifixes from European silver to adorn themselves and learned to work other metals. They sometimes buried brass kettles and other valuable metal not for later use in cooking but to protect their “treasure” from theft until it could be dug up and cut into decorative pieces for adornment.¹⁰⁰ But there is no evidence they made any of their silver jewelry from locally mined ore. Nevertheless, white settlers developed their own mines in search for hoped riches. When Josiah Stow witnessed a land transaction of George Harper’s on April 18,

can West (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 8–10.

¹⁰⁰Versaggi, personal communication to author, September 13, 2013; see also Gina Laczko, *Iroquois Silverwork: from the collection of The Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation*, (Hamilton, NY: Gallery Association of New York State), 1980, 2–4; Arthur Woodward, “Indian Use of the Silver Gorget,” *Indian Notes* 3 (Fall 1926): 232–49.

1789, Harper sold the land but specifically retained ownership “always all gold and silver mines” on the property.¹⁰¹

Josiah Stow’s discovery of “treasure” in the Indian burials on his property became well known. Daniel Buck settled his young family in the middle of the Susquehanna Valley at “Painted Rock,” a site later known as Red Rock, because Native American inhabitants had used red paint to depict various figures, apparently turning the site into a ritual setting or sacred location.¹⁰² This was also the location of the “Indian burying-ground” in the area.¹⁰³ The land at Painted Rock was not good farmland and before the railroad came through the area it consisted largely of a picturesque blend of massive freestanding rock formations and steep cliffs. There must have been a good mill seat in addition to an emotional connection between the sacred site and Buck’s Native American upbringing since Buck built a sawmill on the river there. But he may have also selected the site because of its sacred nature. J. B. Buck, one of Daniel’s grandsons, who was not there during the early years of occupation and appears to be reporting the memories of others, later suggested that what he described as the “first diggings” done in their area were at the Painted Rock site.¹⁰⁴ He recalled his uncle “found the foundation of a house” on the island in the river at

¹⁰¹George Harper to David Hotchkiss, May 16, 1792, Hotchkiss Collection, Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, New York.

¹⁰²Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 52, quoted a local resident who described the setting as “far above the reach of man, was [located] the painted figure of an Indian Chief. The outlines of this figure were plainly visible to the earliest white visitors of this valley.” Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 102, reported, “Major Buck . . . settled opposite what was called Pleasant Island, on the north side of the river, a little above the ‘painted rocks.’ . . . Upon this surface the early settlers found painted in an ingenious, though rude, style, the representations of various animals, such as panthers, bears, wolves, and wild cats. They have, however, long since been defaced, so as now to be invisible. They were evidently painted by Indians; but when, or by whom, is not known.” Based on her thirty years of experience doing archeology at Woodlands Native American sites, including one in the Susquehanna Valley at Great Bend, Nina M. Versaggi, Director, Public Archeology Facility, Binghamton University, has suggested the location may have been a local burial site or a sacred ritual site but was not likely the location of an early village or settlement, personal communication to author, September 13, 2013.

¹⁰³Dubois and Pike, *Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 73.

¹⁰⁴Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 577.

Painted Rock, where they targeted their initial digging. Buck's neighbors later wrote of those foundations being evidence of "the presence and work of civilized man in it [the valley] before any known settlement of it."¹⁰⁵ The foundation was "grown up with trees" and only became evident when the land was cleared and plowed.¹⁰⁶ The site has never been examined by archaeologists to evaluate if any evidence remains of what the men found.

It is possible these early diggings continued as time permitted but most of the focus in the valley was on settling the land and making a living. During this period, the government approved a plan to build new twenty-foot wide roads to replace meandering trails and increase access to the area. These roads would open trade to the Genesee Valley where men like Joseph Knight Sr. and Josiah Stowell could purchase large supplies of grain inexpensively and take their loads down to the river destined for the higher priced urban markets in Pennsylvania. Construction began in April of 1792, and by September the last of the five segments of the road was underway. Captain Charles Williamson, who became general land agent selling Phelps and Gorham lands in western New York, was hired as the road contractor. He in turn hired Isaac Hale the following summer of 1793 to make sure the road on this last segment was properly constructed from Colesville south through the eastern edge of Willingborough Township.¹⁰⁷ The segment of road Hale supervised construction on became the Harmony Turnpike as it passed along the eastern edge of Oquago Mountain.¹⁰⁸ But the side roads remained barely passable for years afterward. When the slave Sylvia Dubois was brought into the valley in 1803, she remembered the road that crossed the Hale property was rough, narrow, and nearly indistinguishable from the forest around it.¹⁰⁹

None of the township's thirty-six heads of household during the 1790s could make a living farming even after new roads tied their farms to major shipping routes. Just like the property of his neighbors, most of the Hale

¹⁰⁵Dubois and Pike, *Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 73.

¹⁰⁶Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 57.

¹⁰⁷Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

¹⁰⁸The Harmony Turnpike connected the valley with villages in New York and would later form the eastern boundary of Oakland Township when it was created December 1853, Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 100.

¹⁰⁹Cornelius Wilson Larison, ed., *Sylvia Dubois: A Biography of the Slav Who Whipt Her Mistress and Gained Her Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 56–57.

land was rocky, steep mountainside that took major effort to make arable. The flatter land along the river was initially used for family gardens, but after the famous "pumpkin freshet" of August 1794, when the river flooded and swept the settlers food supply downriver, settlers grew timothy grass and clover resistant to flooding along the river that provided winter hay for their livestock.¹¹⁰ Only a narrow strip of land on the ridge that followed the floodplain on the north side of the river-supported gardens.¹¹¹

Life on the Hale farm remained difficult and isolated during the early years of settlement. Isaac and Elizabeth's first child, Jesse, was born February 24, 1792. David followed on March 6, 1794. And Alva was born November 29, 1795. The Hale family had three boys ranging in ages from five down to one when British traveler Isaac Weld came down the river with some friends in November 1796. Weld's group found poor families in the valley with empty pantries and few who could spare them even a little food.¹¹² Many of the earliest settlements in the region started their existence with place names such as "Hardscrabble" and "Starvation"—names that were only changed in the nineteenth century as circumstances improved.

Although earning a living remained difficult, settlers continued to come. Robert H. Rose, one of the valley's land developers, sought to attract immigrants from throughout New England and advertised in England and Germany, praising the wheat growing capabilities of the valley in newspaper advertisements. He claimed farmers in the valley typically produced twenty bushels of wheat per acre while many produced twenty-five bushels and some thirty bushels per acre.¹¹³ In reality wheat did not grow well in the valley. It was too wet and humid for a crop more susceptible to fungi

¹¹⁰Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 114. Seba Smith's novel about life on the Susquehanna, *Way Down East; or, Portraits of Yankee Life*, (New York: H. W. Derby, 1857), included an entire chapter detailing the horrors of this tragedy.

¹¹¹Isaac Hale identified this location as the family garden plot in his will. See Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1971), 118.

¹¹²Isaac Weld, Jun., *Travels Through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797* (London: John Stockdale, 1807), 2:342–45.

¹¹³Dr. Robert H. Rose letter, August 2, 1814 as cited in Emily Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 502.

than other grains.¹¹⁴ Barley suffered from similar challenges. Skilled farmers could grow a little of both wheat and barley when managed properly, but they never became major crops. Buckwheat grew best on the foothills and rising slopes of the mountains while oats and rye did much better in their valley than other grains.¹¹⁵ Settlers also grew corn, beans, pumpkins, cucumbers (they called these cow cumpers), potatoes, carrots, and turnips.¹¹⁶ But these could only be grown adequately on the north side of the river where the southern mountains did not shade the land in late fall or early spring, and it took more effort to turn the southern side of the valley into productive land than most of the valley's residents were willing to give.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Robert S. Hansen, Tioga County, Pennsylvania Extension Director, personal communication to author, March 16, 2010. A local historian argued wheat could grow well on high, south facing ground that was above the shade of southern mountains, Rhamanthus M. Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, (Philadelphia: R. T. Peck & Co., 1887), 179, but this ground was usually too steep and rocky to farm adequately.

¹¹⁵Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 431.

¹¹⁶Andrew Tracy's 1799–1801 diary, as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 115–16; Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 431.

¹¹⁷Isaac Hale's son-in-law Michael B. Morse later lived on high, rocky ground at the north end of the Hale farm. (Isaac divided up a farm he had sold to his son Jesse and sold the northern rocky portion to Morse and the southern arable portion to his son-in-law Joseph Smith); but Morse may have planted Indian corn somewhere else more susceptible to mountain shade, such as Isaac's island in the middle of the river, which Morse plowed late in the season on July 11 and 13, 1828. See page 63 of the extended online version of the article by Mark Lyman Staker and Robin Scott Jensen, "David Hale's Store Ledger: New Details about Joseph and Emma Smith, the Hale Family, and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies*, accessed April 10, 2015, https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=hidden&linkURL=53.3StakerJensen_Extended-5351ecc6-b7ef-451f-ad91-b4b78036d422.pdf. Joseph Smith prayed for a blessing that the corn would be good, and Morse implied his prayer had been helpful as the corn sprouted and grew. He recalled, "the corn was good, but late, and the frost killed it." Vogel, "Joseph Lewis Rejoinder, 11 June 1879," *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:311. Such were the circumstances on the farm during the early settlement period as well. Several decades later, some of the valley's residents were successfully growing marketable crops. John Comfort, one of the wealthiest men in the valley, a close friend of Isaac Hale and a member of the same Methodist congregation, regularly reported his success to a son in letters. In one of these reports, he boasted of raising in a single season as much as 750 bushels of oats, 450 bushels of corn, and

The family's struggles became marked during the winter of 1799–1800 when a severe winter hit the county and blanketed it in deep snow from November until May. This hard winter preceded a severe drought the following spring and on June 6, 1800, a frost hit the county that killed most crops. The drought and frost forced some local residents to walk for days trying to find enough food to feed their families.¹¹⁸ During the following summer of 1801, freezing temperatures and biting frosts again killed crops on July 26, August 5, August 25, and September 12–13. After two years of unseasonably cold weather many families were at a breaking point.¹¹⁹ They turned increasingly to the river for support.

During the early settlement years no one could live on their farming. "There was no means of earning money in the valley except by hunting or making shingles."¹²⁰ Wood was more plentiful than wild game and most of the settlers focused on it as their main commodity. Shingles were the first wood product sold because they were easily made without special equipment. Soon lumbering became a major activity along the river from as far north as Cooperstown, New York, and south beyond the Susquehanna Valley to the German settlements in Lancaster County. Men spent their winters felling trees and dragging them over the frozen ground to the river where they floated logs to sawmills powered along its banks. Sawmills quickly developed all along the river and the remaining waterway was filled with large arks and rafts taking lumber down the Susquehanna to Lancaster County where it was unloaded and carried in wagons 100 miles overland to Philadelphia. Some of it was even shipped overseas.

Lumber was also transported overland to the Delaware River about fifteen miles east of the Hale home where it was deposited until the spring floods carried the arks downriver straight to Philadelphia. Both options had their advantages but the Delaware was so popular for residents of the Susquehanna Valley that the village of Deposit eventually grew up nearby, and Hale Eddy, a spot on the river just below Deposit, became a staging area to prepare lumber for spring shipments. Most of Isaac's sons were

2,560 pounds of pork, along with smaller amounts of other items. His large farm was on the best land in the valley and others grew significantly less produce. See John Comfort Correspondence.

¹¹⁸Andrew Tracy's 1799–1801 diary as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 115–16.

¹¹⁹Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 136.

¹²⁰Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 90–91.

boatmen on the river during their younger days, and these men typically traveled in groups of three to six through the German settlements of southern Pennsylvania.¹²¹

While the valley soon produced carpenters, weavers, blacksmiths, and other craftsmen, Isaac Hale spent the majority of his time pursuing the other major profession available to the settlers—hunting and fishing. Meat, in fact, became the major form of currency in the region; when Isaac Hale and Nathaniel Lewis first settled the valley, “they exchanged meat for help on their farms,” and it became “the custom to give cattle, or ‘truck,’ as payment for work.”¹²² During those early settlement years, Isaac Hale could easily have been a model for Nathaniel (Natty) Bumppo, the “Leatherstocking” in James Fenimore Cooper’s novel *The Pioneers; or, The Sources of the Susquehanna; A Descriptive Tale* which reflected a larger than life heroic hunter dressed in buckskin with Indians as his closest friends. Although the novel came out in 1823, the land, houses, and people Cooper described in his 1790s village also reflected life in early Willingborough. By the time Cooper published his novel, game was already harder to find, and Isaac’s profession had largely become a romanticized occupation of the past. It was an even more idealized distant memory when Isaac’s son David wrote about his father’s profession in the early 1870s. David recalled that his father specifically settled in the Susquehanna Valley because of the hunting opportunities the area offered. Whether it was Isaac’s first choice of occupation, or one of convenience, he “was a great hunter, and made his living principally by procuring game.”¹²³ Because the valley had been a Native American hunting ground, Isaac Hale’s occupation put him in direct competition with the Indian villages in the region. But it also aligned him culturally with the local Native Americans since they considered it shameful for a man to do agricultural work; men were expected to hunt and fish.¹²⁴

¹²¹Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger,” and W. Curtis Monts, “Water Transportation on the Susquehanna,” *Wyoming Historical and Geological Society* 23 (1970): 21–39.

¹²²Stanley and Betty Coryell, *Skinner Family History*, 11; Roehm, *Letters of George Catlin and His Family*, 11; and, Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 130.

¹²³Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103.

¹²⁴Mrs. George A. Perkins, *Early Times on the Susquehanna*, (Binghamton: Malette & Reid, 1870), 20–21.

David recalled his father killed most of his wild game in the fall “when it was the fattest” and harvested about 100 deer each year along with bear, elk, and small animals. After cutting the meat into strips, he layered it and put it in long, narrow troughs of birch or maple, much like those used by his Native American neighbors, and from them an item he probably learned to make. He covered the meat with locally gathered salt to keep it from spoiling, holding it into place by heavy stones until snow covered the ground, and he could drag the meat filled troughs through the woods over the snow. Although most of Hale’s meat went downriver on arks bound for the Philadelphia market, or for export to Europe, his own family also relished game at their table.¹²⁵ In Isaac Hale’s will he left instructions for the care his sons were to provide for their mother, specifically mentioning their duty to “maintain . . . Elizabeth Hale in a kind comfortable & proper manner during her life, find her meat, Drink Washing & lodging suitable & convenient for a person who so richly deserves kind treatment.”¹²⁶ Hale was an attentive husband to the end.

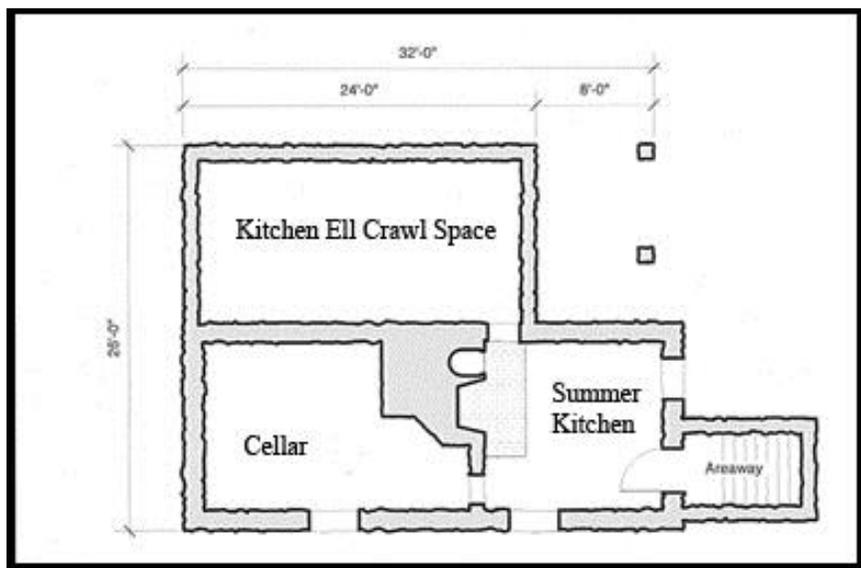
While the “meat” he proscribed may have been a simple reference to food, Hale’s word choice in his mid-nineteenth century will also reflected the typical diet in the area. He did much of his hunting on Turkey Hill, across the river southwest of his home, and in the surrounding mountains. Food remains found on the Hale property include bones from turkey, mammals (such as squirrels), and small birds (such as passenger pigeons).¹²⁷ A

¹²⁵Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 90–91, 103–04; George Peck, *Life and Times*, 67–68; Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 45–46; John M. Duncan, *Travels Through Part of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819* (Glasgow: Hurst, Robinson, and Company, 1823), 86, 189; J. M. Skaggs, *Prime Cut: Livestock Raising and Meat-packing in the United States 1607–1983* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), 13–14, 16–18.

¹²⁶Anderson, *Ancestry and Posterity of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale*, 303.

¹²⁷Matthew Kirk and Corey McQuinn of Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc. in Rensselaer, New York directed the excavation of portions of the Hale home site during 2004, and again from 2010-2012 for the Historic Sites Division of the LDS Church History Department. Their work benefited from regular conversations with staff members of the Historic Sites Division, including Mark Staker, Don Enders, Ben Pykles, and Steve Olsen. The detailed reports of this excavation are available in the unpublished documents: Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc., “Report, Historic Sites, Church Historians Office,” 2005; Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc., “Archeological Field Investigations and Addenda 1 and

local historian recalled how “in some years there were millions of wild pigeons” available for food in the valley.¹²⁸ The Hale family also made money by working leather into products and processing meat for other families in the valley.¹²⁹ They left behind remains of antlers and animal bones made into handles and other implements to sell in the area.¹³⁰ The Hale family did well enough relying on hunting that by the opening of the nineteenth century they began to assemble many comforts.



Outline of Hale home basement, as suggested by archaeology. Drawing by Ted Bartlett, Crawford and Stearns Architects.

2, Joseph Smith Jr. House Site, Town of Oakland (Formerly Harmony), Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania,” May 2005. These reports are on file in the Historic Sites Division. A final report of the excavation is forthcoming and will be placed in the same files. The artifacts have been placed in bags and marked storage boxes and can be accessed in the collections of the LDS Church History Museum.

¹²⁸Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 431; Steve Sullivan, Senior Curator of Urban Ecology, Chicago Academy of Sciences and Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, personal communication with author, July 27, 2013.

¹²⁹See relevant entries throughout Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger.”

¹³⁰See Hartgen, “Report” and Hartgen “Archeological Field Investigations.”

A Comfortable Log Home

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale had few expenses during their early years. Besides making no land payments, they grew their own food, and found resources primarily from their own farm or by sharing with neighbors. Most settlers along the Susquehanna also acquired some cash through selling their timber downriver which they could use to pay taxes, purchase window glass, nails, cooking implements, and other essentials. George Ruper owned their land only briefly after he acquired it from Pennsylvania. The Hales may not have even known he owned it. After Ruper sold his land to Tench Francis; however, the Hales clearly knew who owned their land.

In July 1798 Congress ordered a direct tax on the real property of Americans, known popularly as the “window tax,” this required that every family in the country have their home appraised. Near the end of that year, an assessor appraised the Hale family 15 x 30 foot log home as worth \$26.¹³¹ The tax assessment noted they lived on a 150 acre farm owned by Charles Francis, using either an alternate name for Tench or that of an as yet unidentified son.¹³² Isaac’s brother-in-law Nathaniel Lewis’s family was also listed as occupying 100 acres of Charles Francis’s farmland just west of the Hale family that included a 15 x 28 foot log home and a log stable of unspecified size.¹³³ Francis paid the tax for the land, not Isaac Hale or Nathaniel Lewis.

Details of the assessment and the value of the Hale log home in relation to those listed for others in the valley suggest Isaac and Elizabeth Hale had a comparatively large 900 square feet of living space in a 1 1/2 story log structure, but the building had no windows in the upstairs garret and few if any downstairs.¹³⁴ The Hale family swept their garbage out the doors of

¹³¹Isaac Hale, Willingborough Township, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, United States Government 1798 Direct Tax, Volume 374. Samuel Stanton, who first helped settle Harmony Township built a 12 x 14 foot cabin with no windows, slabs split from logs for the door, and hemlock bark for a roof. His daughter recalled they had a white pine table, “some trenchers” to eat out of with “a few dishes set upon a shelf,” four chairs, two bedsteads, a chest of drawers with legs, two children, a dog, and a cat. “Into this humble dwelling he moved his family on the tenth day of April, 1791.” Rev. Samuel Whaley, *History of the Township of Mount Pleasant, Wayne County, Pennsylvania* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1856), 12–13.

¹³²Willingborough Township, Direct Tax Lists 1798, 3.

¹³³Willingborough Township, Direct Tax Lists 1798, 4.

¹³⁴The tax valuations of log homes in the valley tended to fall into specific

their home into the yard as did all Americans during the late eighteenth century; this was not a sign of an unkempt family.¹³⁵ The artifact scatter of broken ceramics, food scraps, and other items found around the Hale log home suggests that the place where the family lived for approximately



Shell-edged creamware plate fragment, found on Hale Farm. Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

ranges that suggest they had common elements. Seventeen homes were valued between \$9–18 with most valued around the lower end, twelve more valued between \$20–30 with most falling near the upper end, and only a few homes were valued higher than thirty dollars. These were frame homes with the most expensive valued at \$80. This suggests the Hale log home was among the more valuable log homes in the valley. John Travas (also spelled Traves and Travis), a neighbor of the Hales, had a 15 x 30 foot home valued at \$16, which was likely the value of a single story structure. Willingborough Township, Direct Tax Lists 1798, 4. Blackman, who wrote forty years after Wilkinson noted the earliest homes had no windows and used oiled brown paper to let in light, and also concluded that many of the earliest log homes in the valley were “poorly lighted.” Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 469. She described one of these homes in which “a *chink* in the wall was its only window, the panes being irregular bits of glass fitted in as well as they could be, and in dark weather it was necessary to light a candle to do the washing.”

¹³⁵James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 171–72. Archaeologists have noted, “it was common in the 18th century to dispose of household refuse near where it was generated. Spots not far from the back doors of kitchens were considered prime dumping grounds back then,” “George Washington’s Incredible Garbage Dump,” *Popular Archaeology*, 11 (June 2013): 1, <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/june-2013/article/george-washington-s-incredible-garbage-dump>.



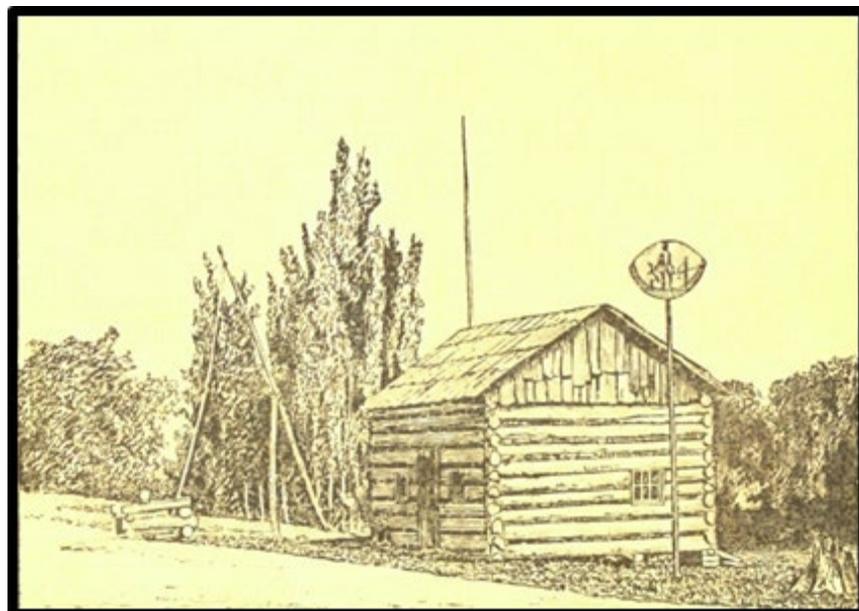
Knife and two forks, found on Hale Farm. Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

twenty years, and where Emma was born, originally stood on foundations repaired and reused for their later frame home. Documentary sources indicate the log home was moved and used as another residence, probably in the “yard” where outside work was accomplished east of the new home.¹³⁶

¹³⁶Isaac Hale mentioned his log house in trial testimony recorded verbatim by two of the three judges presiding at the trial of Jason Treadwell. I have named one of the judges Scribe A (see “Trial Notes Scribe A”) as he recorded the following testimony, confirming the log home still stood in May 1824. Isaac Hale said,

After I came home in the afternoon ^ of 12 may^ [1824] from the inquest saw Jason near my house he was sitting on the fence with my sons, I passed over the fence and took a turn amongst some apple trees and came back close to where he was sitting on the fence—I said to him I have seen a most shocking sight today have seen a man that has been murdered . . . after I went into the house I saw him trotting through th apple tres—I saw some people in the road and supposed he was hurrying to get up with them—it was pretty near night—number of persons came into my house appeared much disturbed, much talk about the murder . . . thursday morning perhaps nine oclock—was a number standing around—Jason spoke to me & said would wish to speak to me—I slipd around the log house & he asked me if I had seen Ashbel Munson & Hill told him I had seen them . . . I dont know how but he followed me into the house . . . He then went out of the house pretty soon—about the middle of the day”

“Joshua McKune—think the first time I saw Treadwell after he returned from down the river was on Thursday early in the day after he had been talking at Mr.



John Osterhout cabin, 15 x 22 feet, built around 1800 in Wolf Hollow near the Hale Home. DuBois and Pike, *The Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 1888, 36.

Hale-period garbage scattered about the site included fragments of transitional creamware plates with a green or blue shell edge common from 1790–1810, the same period of manufacture for a dinner knife and two forks found in the same location.

The artifact scatter suggests a door in the log home faced east toward the work yard and toward a rock-lined well that still exists near the seasonal brook. The brook was the family's primary source of water until they dug their well. A curved foundation wall on the west side of the home may have been part of the original log home cellar.

The partial cellar under the original log home was dug out and expanded to create a basement for the later frame home. In a small area where the

Hales around the log house—I had seen Treadwell before but had no particular conversation—after he went from Hales house I went in company with him I entered into conversation with him respecting the murder of Oliver Harper.”

The tax records also confirm the Hale family had a log home in 1798 and imply one of their two homes taxed in 1813 was a log home. Isaac was continuously taxed for a second home with the few exceptions discussed and explained in the text, until 1825 when it appears his son David Hale took over responsibility for the home. This is discussed in detail below.

basement was not expanded, few artifacts were found, which suggests the original log home had a wooden floor made of hewn timbers or hand sawn lumber. A local slave recalled when she arrived in the valley, “already several people had moved to the neighborhood, had erected log houses, cleared the lands, and begun to cultivate fields and raise stock.”¹³⁷ Each family built “a log-house covered with bark,” which differed from a log cabin in that the logs were smoothed with an adze to create straight edges, and the “bark” was generally used to enclose the upper portions in lieu of sawn lumber as was the case with the Hale family's neighbor John Osterhout (as seen in the illustration below).¹³⁸

Despite the great insulating qualities and durability of logs, even when they were hewn and nicely shaped settlers considered them less refined than sawn lumber in frame homes, and they tried to improve the look of their homes as soon circumstances allowed.¹³⁹ The 1798 direct tax lists noted three sawmills in the valley, including that of Sylvanus Traves (or Travis) who lived on the farm immediately east of the Hale property. John Traves built a sawmill across the river a few hundred feet downstream from the Hale home. Only six families in the valley had frame homes while less than half of the barns and other outbuildings in 1798 were specifically identified as log structures, suggesting the earliest sawn lumber went to

¹³⁷Larison, *Sylvia Dubois*, 57. Although Dubois recalled that her master's large new frame house was the first frame building in the area, she must not have noticed others in the region, since a few settlers had already begun to replace their log structures by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, 530, 532.

¹³⁸Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 131.

¹³⁹Whaley, *History of the Township of Mount Pleasant*, 10–12, and Appendix VI, argued Samuel Stanton built Henry Drinker and John Hilborn's frame homes a few miles east of the Hale family in 1789. Blackman (*History of Susquehanna County*, 88) believed John Hilborn did not arrive in the valley until 1791 to serve as an agent for Henry Drinker, who arrived shortly afterward. Since Whaley wrote several decades before Blackman and drew directly from letters and personal conversations with the individuals discussed, his dating was likely more accurate. Since Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 88, 95, also claimed there was not a sawmill in Harmony Township before 1810, much later than the construction of the Hilborn and Drinker homes, and the 1798 tax records list sawmills a decade earlier than her date, the Hilborn and Drinker homes may have been built shortly after Isaac Hale purchased his property and before his marriage.

outbuildings.¹⁴⁰

When John Comfort's sawmill began operation at the bend of the river, it was clearly the largest in the region and made lumber readily available in the area. Several decades later, in 1825 Isaac's sons Jesse and Ward bought the Traves sawmill, and the illiterate John and Mercy Traves both signing their "X" for the transaction.¹⁴¹ Some of the millers, sawyers and workmen of these mills were among the earliest converts to Mormonism.¹⁴²

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale continued to welcome new babies into their family with the births of a string of girls and Isaac's namesake boy pressed in the middle. Phoebe was born on May 1, 1798, Elizabeth followed February 14, 1800, Isaac Ward (who went by Ward) on March 11, 1802, Emma on July 10 1804, and Tryal on November 21, 1806.

Hale was not taxed for a barn in 1798. Since he made his living hunting, there was little need to store a harvest of grain and animal feed. There would not be a gristmill within twenty miles for another two decades and the family likely ate little grain themselves. Hale would have needed a smokehouse and butchery to process his regular catch of game, and these were likely the first outbuildings he built after a privy—if he built one—not everyone did in the early years. Even decades later, the Hale men were hired by their neighbors to cut meat, soften it with saleratus, and smoke it for eating in later months. They also dressed, grained, and tanned deer hides for their neighbors. Hale's sons and a son-in-law, also caught dozens

of eel in the nearby river and smoked them for later consumption.¹⁴³ Most settlers were trying to provide basic needs for their families and built little more than the necessities even two decades after the window tax. William Cope, a young Quaker from a wealthy family in Philadelphia, came through the neighborhood in 1818 on a tour of the remote country, and he observed, "these people do not seem to value the comforts of a good house as persons in a more cultivated country. They spend whole days in hunting & yet their houses are left in an unfinished state. For instance the scaffolding for building A. Lathrop's chimney yet remains & looks as if it had withstood many a wintry storm; but the chimney is scarcely raised as high as the roof of his house."¹⁴⁴

Because Cope lived in the city he was more attuned to differences in attitude between the valley's occupants and "persons in a more cultivated country." He also viewed hunting as a leisure activity rather than an occupation that left little time for making one's home fancy, and he clearly overstated his case. But his observation captured a difference in attitude between the working men and women along the Susquehanna River and the gentry in comfortable Philadelphia homes. But the cultural divide was not only due to differences in attitudes about refinement, gentility, and the role of "a good house" in conferring these, it was also partly due to a lack of title or attitudes that come with ownership of property in the Susquehanna Valley. Residents changed their efforts toward improving their homes and surroundings dramatically after they gained legal deed to their farms. This did not happen quickly.

Tench Francis dictated his will on April 4, 1800, leaving his large tract of Susquehanna Valley property to his wife. While the Hale property changed owners, Pennsylvania sold 9,000 acres of remaining land in the valley to Colonel Timothy Pickering Jr., a Harvard graduate, intellectual, military officer, and politician. George Washington had invited Pickering to negotiate a settlement with the Seneca Indians in western Pennsylvania which the Colonel did with such success that Washington made him Indian commissioner to the Iroquois. Pickering negotiated the treaty of Canandaigua in 1794, and served as the United States expert on Indian relations until he became Washington's Secretary of State, a position Pickering held until disagreements with John Adams led to his dismissal on May 12, 1800.

¹⁴³Staker and Jensen, "David Hale's Store Ledger."

¹⁴⁴William Cope, "A Journey to Great Bend and Return to Philad-a," Cope Family Papers, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, capitalization added for clarity.

¹⁴⁰Willingborough Township, 1798 Direct Tax.

¹⁴¹Augustus B. Easton, ed., *History of the Saint Croix Valley* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1909), 2:1115; Commonwealth vs. Jason Treadwell, Susquehanna County Court of Oyer and Terminer, August 1824, Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania; Staker and Jensen, "David Hale's Store Ledger"; Byron Hale, "Reuben Hale's Obituary," March 21, 1887; "John Travis to Jesse and Isaac W. Hale Deed, April 30, 1827," Susquehanna County Deed Books, 6:255.

¹⁴²Nelson Wheeler Whipple worked at John Comfort's sawmill after Martin Lane purchased it. Anor Whipple, "History of Nelson Wheeler Whipple, 1818–1887," <http://clegg-webb.com/Histories/Nelson%20Wheeler%20Whipple%20History.html>. Others worked up or down river. One of these mill operators left an account of the rafting that played a role in his mill operation, noting, "I stayed in that country about eight years and labored very hard rafting on the Susquehanna River, and many times my life was much exposed." Zera Pulsipher, "History of Zera Pulsipher," typescript, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

After his discharge, Pickering decided he wanted to retire from public life, move to “the country,” and become a gentleman farmer. When Pickering announced to his friends his plans to move in the neighborhood of the Isaac Hale family, his associates tried to dissuade him from settling along such a remote area of the Susquehanna. “It would be twenty years before forests would become cultivated fields. In that remote region, we cannot conceive the farming will ever be profitable,” a nephew wrote.¹⁴⁵

Pickering was part of the American gentry and had little in common with the Hale family. When he drew a map of the valley in 1800 it only depicted the frame homes he found there, such as that of Daniel Buck at Painted Rock and John Hilborn at the river’s bend, but not the Hale cabin between those two, or the other log homes of families scattered along the river.¹⁴⁶ These backwoodsmen and their families did not receive Pickering’s notice for most purposes. He selected a piece of property in the Susquehanna Valley for what he called his “plantation,” ordered long lists of specific trees and vegetable seed from distributors in England, and hired two men—Isaac Hale and Nathaniel Lewis—to clear part of thirty acres of land during the winter of 1800-1801 in anticipation of his settling the area. Hale and Lewis also built two houses for him, a log one in 1801 and a large, frame, three-story structure in 1805.¹⁴⁷ Colonel Pickering drew detailed plans for the home and for a large barn that included specific instructions as to how each space should be arranged and used.¹⁴⁸ Hale and Lewis be-

¹⁴⁵Charles W. Upham, *The Life of Timothy Pickering* 4 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873), 4:5.

¹⁴⁶The original map is in the Timothy Pickering Papers at the Bishop Memorial Library, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. A photograph of the map is in the author’s possession.

¹⁴⁷Albert Clarke, “Methodist Episcopal Church, Lanesboro, Penn., Centennial Celebration, March 3–5, 1912,” Susquehanna County Historical Society. Although Emily Blackman dates construction of the first Pickering home to 1800 (Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 95), Timothy Pickering noted in a letter to one of his sons that it was built in 1801. Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119. This was the home the Lewis family briefly occupied. Pickering’s surviving papers also provide detailed plans for construction of the second home and information about this larger structure. A detailed exploration of this home, including images of the construction plans, and the Pickering family interaction with Isaac Hale and his family is in Mark Staker, “Emma Hale Smith and Her Family in Harmony, Pennsylvania,” Historic Sites Files, CHL, 2010.

¹⁴⁸Timothy Pickering Jr., “Drawings and Instructions for a House in the

came “the poor neighbors whom he has employed [who] view him with the respect and affection of children to a father.”¹⁴⁹

As Isaac Hale reviewed Pickering’s instructions and learned to build the Pickering home, he likely gained experience and ideas he later used in building his own home. While Hale and Lewis worked on the Pickering property, they associated with Colonel Pickering’s son, Tim Pickering. The younger Pickering, a Harvard graduate like his father, resigned his navy commission on May 2, 1801, left Massachusetts on a stagecoach one week later, and eventually walked from the end of the turnpike, through Pennsylvania’s mountains into the Susquehanna Valley and to his father’s land. Son and father prepared for the rest of the family, happy they had escaped the yellow fever in the cities, and anticipating a much healthier climate along the river.¹⁵⁰

Isaac Hale worked for the Pickering family over the next few years. The younger Pickering, a man “wont to speak little and to write less,” grew lonesome in the valley, and he began courting Lurena Cole, a sister of Nathaniel Lewis’s wife, Sarah Cole Lewis.¹⁵¹ The well-educated Tim Pickering must have felt out of place within the frontier family of Nathaniel Lewis. But as part of what then existed of an American aristocracy, he immediately gave status to the Lewis and Hale families, a relationship the family still referenced a half-century later. Lurena also became a popular name with future generations of the family. As Tim courted Lurena, and they may have already announced their planned wedding, Isaac worked on the larger, elaborate Pickering mansion. And Elizabeth Hale expected a child again.

Everyone in the valley assisted each other in their daily tasks during social events where this combination of work and play were known as “frolics.” Frolics were occasions for dancing, eating, and socializing while

Country,” The Timothy Pickering Papers, 1745–1820, 45:49–55, Massachusetts Historical Society. A copy of these house plans are in the author’s possession. Pickering grew up in and returned to die in the 1651 Pickering house in Salem, Massachusetts, which remained the oldest home in the United States continuously occupied by one family until the end of the 20th century.

¹⁴⁹Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:117.

¹⁵⁰Timothy Pickering III (Tim Pickering’s) biographical details are included in his son’s work, Charles Pickering, M.D., *Chronological History of Plants: Man’s Record of His Own Existence Illustrated through Their Names, Uses, and Companionship* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1879), vii-xvi.

¹⁵¹Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119.

settlers raised barns, husked corn, quilted fabric, or other tasks usually completed as a community. The slave Sylvia Dubois, who worked in the tavern at the other end of the Susquehanna Valley in what became Great Bend Township, often served “great numbers of hunters and drovers” who came to the tavern from 1803–1806. The hunters came to trade, “to sell deer meat, bear meat, wild turkeys, and the like, and to exchange the skins of wild animals for such commodities, as they wished.” She remembered they often had a good time. “We’d hardly get over one frolic when we’d begin to fix for another.”¹⁵² Settlers held a big frolic on Wednesday, July 4, where they enjoyed dancing and eating as they worked together while honoring Isaac Hale and the other men in the valley who had served in the Revolutionary War. Elizabeth Hale delivered a daughter the following Tuesday on July 10, 1804, and named her Emma—a name then popular in both the United States and Great Britain but with no apparent family connection. It is possible that Hale’s role in working for the well-read Pickering family encouraged them to suggest names for his daughter.

Two days after the baby’s birth, Colonel Pickering’s good friend Alexander Hamilton was killed in his famous duel with Aaron Burr. Several of Pickering’s friends had purchased large tracts of land in the Susquehanna Valley from him; and those friends combined the properties together and gave them as a gift to Hamilton’s widow for her family’s support.¹⁵³ Through this means Elizabeth Hamilton briefly became owner of a significant portion of the Hale neighborhood. Hamilton divided her land into affordable lots and sold them to new settlers which increased the population of the valley. The Pickering family continued to hold onto most of their land, however, and Hale worked for them alongside Colonel Pickering’s young son, Tim. The twenty-three-year-old Tim married twenty-three-year-old Lurena Cole, on December 29, 1804.¹⁵⁴

Just as Isaac Hale and Nathaniel Lewis finished building the large Pickering mansion, Lurena Cole Pickering and her husband Tim, along with Lurena’s mother (Nathaniel Lewis’s mother-in-law), moved into it.¹⁵⁵ Lurena delivered a son, Charles Pickering, November 10, 1805. Young Emma and Charles were briefly raised within the same extended family until Charles left the valley with his mother. He eventually studied at Harvard

like his father, became a member of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences in 1827, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1828, and became a leading American naturalist. Charles Pickering became America’s leading polygenist, a scientist who believed that different races had been created separately—eventually publishing his book *Races of Man and Their Geographical Distribution*.¹⁵⁶

Tim Pickering grew increasingly ill after his marriage to Lurena and the birth of his son. A gaping hole grew in his neck, and he became emaciated until he looked like a living skeleton.¹⁵⁷ The Lewis family moved into the Pickering log home to better care for him. Colonel Pickering sought the advice of Benjamin Rush, formerly surgeon general in the Continental Army, and other prominent physicians who diagnosed Tim as having throat cancer. Then the elder Pickering came back to the valley to take his son away for better medical treatment.

When he arrived, Colonel Pickering wrote to his son Henry that Nathaniel Lewis, “who has been much used to sick persons, and whose experience enables him to judge better than I, thinks your brother not likely to survive three days longer.”¹⁵⁸ Tim Pickering mentally prepared to die in good nineteenth-century fashion with a “serenity of mind, flowing from a sincere and constant endeavor to preserve a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man!”¹⁵⁹ Lewis was right and his brother-in-law died three days later on May 14, 1807.¹⁶⁰ Isaac Hale helped bury him on

¹⁵⁶Pickering, *Chronological History of Plants*, vii-xvi. For significant publications by Charles Pickering see, *The Geographical Distribution of Animals and Plants: United States exploring expedition, 1838–1842, under the command of Charles Wilkes* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1863); and *Races of Man and Their Geographical Distribution* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854).

¹⁵⁷Timothy Pickering Letter to John Pickering, Starucca, May 3, 1807, Timothy Pickering Papers, 4:2.

¹⁵⁸Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:118.

¹⁵⁹Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:117, emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁰Upham (*Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:118–19) places the date of Timothy Pickering III (Tim Pickering’s) death to May 14, 1808. It is clear in the family correspondence, however, that the death occurred the year before on May 14, 1807 (see Timothy Pickering Jr. to John Pickering May 3, 1807 where Timothy III’s death is added at the bottom of the letter in pencil noting it occurred May 14 [1807]; cf. Timothy Pickering to Rebecca White Pickering, February 21, 1808; Rebecca Pickering to Timothy Pickering Jr. March 27, 1808.

¹⁵²Larison, *Sylvia Dubois*, 57–58, 67.

¹⁵³Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:36–41.

¹⁵⁴Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 95.

¹⁵⁵Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119.

the brow of a hill “between the mountain and Starucca [Creek].” “On the day of his burial,” Colonel Pickering wrote of his son, “I intimated to Hail and Lewis my wish that flat stones might be set up at his grave. They seem to have thought of it. ‘We will do it,’ said Hail; ‘we will fix the stones, so that Charles, when grown up, if he should come this way, may find the spot where his father’s body was laid.’ These words were uttered with so much affection and respect for the deceased as showed how greatly your brother was beloved.”¹⁶¹ Colonel Pickering wrote to his son Henry, “Mr. Lewis and family have, for two months, lived in the small house we built in 1801. . . . When we are gone, his family will move into the other house.”¹⁶² Pickering took Lurena, who was then pregnant with her second son, Edward, and the young Charles back to Salem, Massachusetts, to live. The sons likely visited their father’s grave at some later point and replaced the original Hale and Lewis marker since a nicely carved 1820s headstone with a weeping willow and well-carved lettering now marks the grave.¹⁶³

Religion in the Hale Family

Congregationalism

A religious transformation in the Hale family followed the death of Tim Pickering; and a transformation in the Hale home and land followed their religious transformation. This did not happen, however, until the family already had considerable religious experience. When Isaac and Elizabeth Hale settled the valley, they had only nominal religious involvement. A Congregational minister traveled through the region in 1789 and appointed Daniel Buck as the local pastor. Buck served as the first permanent minister stationed in the Everlasting Hills.¹⁶⁴ He found success in his attempt to spread religious conviction, and he developed a congregation downriver eight miles from the Hale home. He established another congregation about ten miles upriver from the Hales in South Bainbridge, New York, and found success in other valleys in the region. When a visiting min-

ister came to the Susquehanna Valley to observe Buck’s congregations in December of 1797, he noted local excitement over religion had increased significantly in the previous few years and wrote in his journal, it “looks like the beginning of an awakening.”¹⁶⁵

Jonathan Edwards’ encouragement to have boys like Buck brought up speaking local Native American languages was an outgrowth of the First Great Awakening that spread across the nation more than fifty years earlier as religious excitement sparked in congregations of religiously involved citizens, but then slowly cooled. This local “awakening” had more in common with the Second Great Awakening that would begin in a few years, however, since it attracted the unchurched in the area until “nearly all the families” in the valley offered morning and evening prayers.¹⁶⁶ Both the Hale and Lewis families were caught up in this awakening, and the parents took their one-year-old sons, Alva Hale and Levi Lewis, to Buck for baptism.¹⁶⁷

John B. Buck, a grandson of Daniel Buck, recalled years later, after the valley’s Congregationalists had transformed themselves into Presbyterians, how during the 1790s the congregation

was scattered up and down the river, in cabins. The only means of getting from here [at the log church house eight miles downriver from the Hales] was by canoes. They went as far as the rift or rapids, where they left their canoes, and walked past the rapids, then took passage in a large canoe around by my father’s. For dinner, they carried milk in bottles, and mush. They listened to one sermon in the forenoon, and then came back to the canoe and ate dinner, then went back to second service; Daniel Buck was minister. In summer this was their means of travel. With increase of families the means of communication increased. In winter there was no other way save by foot-paths. For many years there were no denominations save Presbyterians [Congregationalists].¹⁶⁸

This early religious “awakening” in the valley did not last long because of what became known as the “Buck difficulty” in 1799. During that year,

¹⁶¹Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119.

¹⁶²Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119.

¹⁶³I am grateful to Nancy Mess for helping me find the location of the current Timothy Pickering headstone in the Lanesboro Cemetery.

¹⁶⁴Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 105; First Presbyterian Church Records, Hallstead, Pennsylvania.

¹⁶⁵Lawrence Bothwell, ed., *The Journals of Seth Williston, 1796–1800* (Binghamton, NY: Broome County Historical Society, 1992), 108.

¹⁶⁶Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 106.

¹⁶⁷Register of Baptisms, First Presbyterian Church Records, Hallstead, January 11, 1797.

¹⁶⁸Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County*, 543.

Buck was charged with teaching false doctrine, leading some members of his congregation to try removing him from his position. He began focusing on the Old Testament rather than the New for his teaching, and his parishioners accused him of “preaching immoral doctrine” along with claiming “the doctrine of faith was not found in the Old Testament and that a ‘conscience’ was not a natural faculty, but the result of education.”¹⁶⁹ Although Buck continued to serve until his death in 1814, the congregation struggled for the rest of his tenure.¹⁷⁰

The Hale and Lewis families were apparently influenced along with others by the Buck difficulty, and withdrew from his congregation—although it is not clear if it was the “immoral doctrine,” issues of faith, those of a conscience, or all of these that offended them. The only child of theirs to be baptized after the controversy began was Isaac and Elizabeth’s daughter Emma, who was baptized by Buck not long after her birth in 1804, just before Methodism arrived in the valley.¹⁷¹ The slave Sylvia Dubois attended the same congregation where Emma was baptized and described it as “the Calvinistic faith . . . the Old School Presbyterians,” and consequently tended to adopt an attitude of fatalism. Dubois believed, “‘Tain’t no use to worry—it only makes things worse. Let come what will, you’ve got to bear it—‘tain’t no use to flinch. Providence knows best—He sends to you whatever He wants you to have, and you’ve got to take it and make the best of it.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County*, 550.

¹⁷⁰Stocker noted in his account of this difficulty (*Centennial History of Susquehanna County*, 550), “Mr. Buck closed his labors, *apparently*, as pastor over the church in 1799(?),” his question mark after the date expressing some uncertainty as to when Buck was replaced. The “Register of Pastors in the First Presbyterian Church of Hallstead,” Susquehanna County Historical Society, lists him as continuing to serve until the installation of Oliver Hill as Pastor on August 13, 1814.

¹⁷¹Emma Smith’s baptismal record was copied into the Register of Baptisms, First Presbyterian Church, Hallstead, in 1865 when the original congregation’s records were all transferred into the later volume by a single scribe. At that time her baptismal date was given simply as ditto marks underneath Alva Hale’s baptismal date of January 11, 1797. The copyist added “Joe Smith’s wife” next to her name to preserve her famous status but did not include her baptismal date which is now lost. It is not clear why only Alva and Emma are listed as Hale children in the records.

¹⁷²Larison, *Sylvia Dubois*, 88.

While there is no documentary evidence to suggest why the Hale family continued to attend the Buck congregation after it encountered difficulties, the Pickerings may have contributed to a brief renewed religious interest in the family that dissipated when the Pickerings left. Isaac was still working for Colonel Pickering when the Hale’s had Emma baptized. After the Buck difficulty, “instead of nearly all the families being pious, not but two or three were to be found entitled to that sacred epithet.”¹⁷³ The community still gathered for social interaction on the Sabbath, but they held their Sunday meetings in the local log schoolhouse and read from Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason* instead of the Bible.

It was during this troubled period that other religious denominations began to appear in the valley. The first two men to have frame homes built along the east bend of the Susquehanna River were also prominent Quakers who brought their Society of Friends beliefs with them from southern Pennsylvania. They were Henry Drinker, who acquired large tracts of Willingborough Township, particularly on the south side of the river, and John Hilborn, who served as his land agent helping to sell the Drinker property. “It is said the first religious meetings in Harmony were those of the Friends, at the house of John Hilborn.”¹⁷⁴ Isaac Hale and his family may have attended these early meetings for a time since in 1825, when subpoenaed to testify at the murder trial of Jason Treadwell, Hale refused to swear an oath when placed in the witness chair, but “affirmed” his willingness to tell the truth—an understanding of Christian duty held by Quakers.¹⁷⁵

As with Zachariah Tarble, Hilborn had been captured by Indians, but his capture occurred in 1773 near Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, 85 miles south of the Susquehanna Valley, after which he was also sold into slavery in Canada. Hilborn eventually purchased his freedom, but his experience gave him more familiarity with Native Americans than was typical for the period. He was also an avid reader and was better (self) educated than most. The only library in the region for many years was his personal collection he allowed others to use. Settlers from Harford, Bridgewater, Great Bend, Windsor, Ararat, and other villages ensconced in the mountains rode on horseback to Hilborn’s to read his books, leaving home early in the morning, and returning late in the evening.¹⁷⁶ While Nathaniel Lewis owned at

¹⁷³Wilkinson, *Annals of Binghamton*, 106.

¹⁷⁴Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 92.

¹⁷⁵“Trial Notes of Scribe A” and “Trial Notes of Scribe B.”

¹⁷⁶Nancy Mess, “Historical Scraps from Susquehanna,” unpublished manu-

least one book, and Isaac Hale left a “box” of books at his death valued at a modest \$3.50, for many years what few books were generally available for reading in the narrow valley were available only through Hilborn.¹⁷⁷ Eventually, in 1809, Henry Drinker renamed the eastern portion of the valley Harmony Township, reminding settlers of his Quaker ideals.¹⁷⁸ By then, Methodism had transformed the entire valley, and the Society of Friends disappeared from the community.

Methodism

Elizabeth Hale’s brother Nathaniel had joined the Methodists in Wells, Vermont, with his parents along with “some of [their] children and neighbors.” But Elizabeth had not.¹⁷⁹ Because of her father’s conversion, howev-

script in the author’s possession and on file at the Lanesboro Town Hall, Susquehanna Depot, Pennsylvania.

¹⁷⁷George Peck, *Early Methodism*, 332–33, related a story as he heard it from Nathaniel Lewis where Nathaniel asked to “try” Joseph Smith’s “spectacles” to translate “strange tongues” from Adam Clarke’s *Commentary and Critical Notes on the Holy Bible* into English. This suggests Nathaniel may have owned at least one of the six volumes of the *Commentary*, although his statement “I have got” could also mean it was borrowed. The *Commentary* became one of the principal Methodist theological resources, and Peck indicated he had read it and believed Clarke’s arguments supporting a Trinitarian view. Peck, *Early Methodism*, 395. Peck also indicates John Comfort had access to C. Gile’s book, *Dagon of Calvinism; or, the Young Hammerer*, which may have been borrowed or owned. Peck, *Early Methodism*, 257. It is likely there were a few additional books in the valley but the data is not sufficient to discover who owned them or what they were titled.

¹⁷⁸A later reminiscence ties the name Harmony to Henry Drinker Jr.’s land agent John Hilborn. “Drinker, impressed with the good heartedness of his steward named the area HARMONY in respect of the Hilborns who were Quakers,” Abner H. Baird, “Deeds, Wills, Maps, Pictures, and Historical Information of the Joseph Smith and Isaac Hale Farms,” L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University. However, since Drinker was himself a Quaker, it is likely that the name reflected the sentiments of both owner and agent.

¹⁷⁹Not only did David Hale believe his mother was converted to Methodism in Pennsylvania, but neighbors of the Lewis family in Vermont indicated that some of the children in the family did not join Methodism, unaware of Elizabeth Hale’s later conversion. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103; Abby Maria Hemenway, *The History of Rutland County, Vermont: Civil, Ecclesiastical, Biographical, and Military* (White River Junction, Vt.: White River Paper Co., 1882), 1194; Paul Hiland *History of Wells, Vermont for the First Century after*

er, she may have been sympathetic to Methodism early. She may have waited for an ecstatic religious experience to bring her into the faith similarly to many others. Shortly after Daniel Buck’s Congregationalist community fell into disarray, and the Quakers began to establish themselves in the valley, Methodism—America’s fastest growing religion at the time—first arrived in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Methodist circuit rider William Colbert left Lackawanna, fifty miles south of the Hale home, on Monday, December 3, 1792, heading north on horseback to take his increasingly popular religion into the Endless Mountains. He quickly found himself alone in the darkness surrounded by the cries of “howling, ravening wolves, and greedy bears, in these regions of barrenness.” In that isolated country, Colbert found the occasional “smoky cabin” tucked back from the river hidden in the woods. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had recently coined the phrase, “cleanliness is next to Godliness,” and his thinking clearly influenced Colbert who frequently used the word “filthy” in his journal to describe the cabins he saw, the people he met, and the meager food they shared. After the “half starved” Colbert ate with a “nasty dirty woman” and her “nasty children,” he established a “black class” in the valley west of Willingborough and then headed home.¹⁸⁰ Methodist classes were loose associations that gathered for Bible study and provided organized service to help the needy in a community, and the white members of the community typically organized classes independently from their black members.¹⁸¹ This class would have operated

its Settlement; with Biographical Sketches by Robert Parks, Esq. (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle & Co., 1869), 33; and, Lewis Family files, Susquehanna County Historical Society Archives, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

¹⁸⁰William Colbert, “A Journal of the Travels of William Colbert Methodist Preacher thro’ parts of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and Virginia in 1790 [to 1798],” Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.

¹⁸¹The evidence suggests a mixed response to African-Americans in the valley during the early years. It appears that most of the residents were opposed to slavery but were not particularly sympathetic to abolitionists. Selah Payne, who was a fellow Methodist of the Hale family, and who provided his home as the second meeting place along with the Hale family, began to build an “African college” on his property, but abandoned the project. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 105. But fellow Methodist John Comfort, at whose home the Methodists met when they did not meet in the Payne home, concluded, “abolitionism is the most destructive to the peace of society in families neighborhoods and the church-

without formal support or direction and would not have taken religion over the mountain to the Susquehanna Valley.

Colbert's journal suggests the type of Methodism he brought to the area was the style that soon became popular throughout the mountains, a type known as Shouting Methodism. One of the key elements of this style of preaching was a belief in direct answer to prayer. Colbert met with a Presbyterian minister as he traveled, perhaps Daniel Buck, and after a deep conversation he noted of the minister, "he believes it is his duty to pray in secret, but says he has not heart to it—this is his complaint. I told him as God has convinced him it is his duty to pray in secret, he ought to pray for a heart to pray." The minister then went on to partially defend his inability to pray as directed by telling Colbert about the Shaking Quakers, or Shakers, a religious group Colbert had not heard about, who had "an old woman among them call'd the Elect Lady, who fortold her own death." While she accurately predicted the time of her death, the minister was convinced the devil had come to take her. This Elect Lady, Ann Lee, had been a prophetess, Colbert acknowledged, but a prophetess who was deceived. By implication the Presbyterian minister seemed to think praying for direct answers and prophesying would invite influence from the devil on him as well.¹⁸²

Although Colbert left the region and never went into the Susquehanna Valley where the Hale family lived, his type of Methodism became widespread in the region as others did not seem to share the concerns of the Presbyterian minister. While there was not a single "Elect Lady" among the Methodists who could prophesy and reveal the will of God, many of the women among the Shouting Methodists found themselves in the woods seeking inspiration as they reminded the young they should be "retiring to the grove for a solitary walk, or private devotion."¹⁸³ They saw themselves

es of god it has Divided the Baptist Church and presbeterian Church at Mont Rose. . . . their object is not to emancipate the slave but they mean it as a hobby to overthrow the Democracy of the government." John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, February 23, 1838.

¹⁸²Colbert, "Journal of the Travels of William Colbert."

¹⁸³Enoch Mudge, *The American Camp-Meeting Hymn Book* (Boston: Joseph Burdakin, 1818), vii; Adam Clarke, the theologian to which many Methodist clergymen, including Emma's uncle Nathaniel Lewis, looked for insight into the scriptures, interpreted the "Elect Lady" mentioned in the Second Epistle of John (2 John 1–5) as an "eminent Christian matron . . . at whose house the apostles, and traveling evangelists, frequently preached, and were entertained." Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, The Text Carefully*

as "saints" in the tradition of early Christianity, and their hymns encouraged them to pray, asking "to see the power of God manifested."¹⁸⁴ To reinforce this effort, they sang "Ye saints, who love the Lord's dear name, Who love to worship at his feet . . . If you retire into the grove. . . In every flow'r, and shrub, and tree, God's goodness you may plainly see."¹⁸⁵ Hymn writing became a popular pastime in the Susquehanna Valley and Justin Clark, editor of the local newspaper *The Centinel*, regularly published to an interested audience information in his newspaper about religious music, including locally written hymns under various pseudonyms.¹⁸⁶

It took several more years before Methodism made its way to the Susquehanna Valley. Gehiel (Hiel) Lewis, a younger nephew of the Hales, wrote of Isaac, he "was converted [to Methodism] under the ministry of Rev. Timothy Lee, before Mrs. [Emma] Smith was born."¹⁸⁷ Emma was already born and baptized into the Congregationalists before Reverend Lee arrived in the valley. Elizabeth Hale connected herself to the Methodists early and may have been the one Hiel Lewis had heard about, confusing the details, but Isaac remained distant.¹⁸⁸

Printed from the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorised Version, Including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts with a Commentary and Critical Notes 2 vols., (New York: Methodist Episcopal Church, 1831), 2:890.

¹⁸⁴Mudge, *American Camp-Meeting Hymn Book*, iv.

¹⁸⁵Mudge, *American Camp-Meeting Hymn Book*, 11.

¹⁸⁶See "Sacred Music," *The Centinel*, 1 (December 1, 1816): 3; "Church Music," *The Centinel* 2 (May 17, 1817): 3.

¹⁸⁷Vogel, "Hiel Lewis Reply, 6 August 1879," *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:316.

¹⁸⁸Blackman noted Elizabeth Hale was "for fifty years a consistent member of the Methodist church." Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103. Since Elizabeth died in 1842, Blackman's date would put her initial conversion at 1792 when William Colbert took Methodism to upper Pennsylvania but not the Susquehanna Valley. This was five years before Alva Hale's baptism in the Congregational Church and thirteen years before Methodism was brought to Willingborough Township. If Blackman was counting from the date she wrote her account in 1872 it would put Elizabeth's conversion to 1822, probably too late since most of her family joined much earlier. I have interpreted Blackman's "fifty years" as a round number meaning "for a long time." Since Blackman only mentioned Elizabeth as a "consistent" member and not Isaac, either he was a late joiner or had not initially been consistent.

Frederic Stier and Timothy Lee first arrived in the Susquehanna Valley in 1805 and found most of their success there in 1806.¹⁸⁹ When Stier and Lee brought Methodism it resulted in “a general revival of religion which swept along that portion of the Susquehanna Valley” as the popular movement replaced Buck’s Congregationalism.¹⁹⁰ Lee did not list any Hales among his converts, but missing names in the records was not unusual as most individuals caught up in local revivals were not numbered among the short list of converts—particularly if they were already baptized.¹⁹¹

In late 1806 Joel Smith replaced Stier and Lee as the Methodist circuit rider assigned to the Tioga circuit that included Harmony. He likely consolidated the recent converts into specific congregations and provided some organization in the valley. Nathaniel Lewis dedicated much of his time during that year to working for the Unitarian Timothy Pickering and assisting the dying Tim Pickering in his last hours, but he was also likely involved in Methodism by then, since he had preached for years in Vermont before marrying and coming to Pennsylvania. But Lewis clearly increased his ties to the movement shortly after the Pickering death.

In 1807 Francis Asbury, the first Bishop of the American Methodists, planned a trip through the Susquehanna Valley to follow up on recent conversions by ordaining local preachers, organizing congregations, and leading a large revival. Two months after the Pickering death Asbury stopped in the dark at Taylor’s Tavern a half mile west of the Hale home on Emma Hale’s third birthday, July 10, 1807. Asbury wasn’t particularly impressed with the area, noting in his journal, “The heights of the Susquehanna are stupendous; the bottom lands very fertile; but this river runs through a country of unpleasing aspect, morally and physically. Rude, irregular, uncultivated is the ground; wild, ignorant, and wicked are the people.”¹⁹² William Colbert was even harsher in his evaluation of the settlers in the area when he came through in 1793, writing, “It appears to me from what I have heard that Susquehanna woods abound with whores, whoremongers, and

¹⁸⁹Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 36.

¹⁹⁰Peck, *Early Methodism*, 455.

¹⁹¹Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 36.

¹⁹²Francis Asbury, “Journal July 11, 1807,” cited in Peck, *Early Methodism*, 154.



Room in the Taylor (later Munson) Tavern (with original paneling) where Francis Asbury likely slept. Mary S. and John W. Parks, present owners. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

drunkards, and for all I know murderers.”¹⁹³

This negative depiction appears to have been more rhetoric than reality for Bishop Asbury as it was for Colbert. In the morning after Asbury’s arrival, he attended a camp meeting already underway for two days and extolled, “God is in the camp and with us.”¹⁹⁴ He added that more than a thousand people had gathered to the meeting—quite an event for the little valley. The next day at the Sunday meeting on July 12, more than two thousand people came from as far as several counties away for the worship service. Given the large gathering just down the road from Isaac and Elizabeth Hale’s farm, it is likely they were at the revival.

Between sermons Francis Asbury designated Nathaniel Lewis and four others as “local preachers” and ordained Lewis a Deacon. Lewis was apparently later ordained an Elder.¹⁹⁵ But circuit riders regularly visited the local

¹⁹³Colbert, *Journal of the Travels of William Colbert*, January 15, 1793.

¹⁹⁴Francis Asbury, Journal July 11, 1807, cited in George Peck, *Early Methodism*, 154.

¹⁹⁵Even in his old age, Nathaniel Lewis was referred to by John Comfort on occasion as “old Brother Lewis.” “John Comfort to Silas Comfort, Harmony, Jan-

congregations and preached in the Susquehanna Valley throughout Lewis's tenure as a preacher.

J. B. Buck recalled of that early period, "Everybody espoused Methodism, —men, women and children. They frequently walked from five to six miles to be present at prayer-meetings."¹⁹⁶ The shift in religion was not as universal as he suggested, however, and Buck's congregations down river in Great Bend and up north in Bainbridge continued. But Harmony Township was virtually all Methodist. This brought tension between the communities. Nathaniel Lewis led his congregation along the east bend of the river while the west continued with their traditional worship increasingly under the influence of Daniel Buck's son, Captain Ichabod Buck. The competing congregations produced tension. "Elder Lewis [prayed], 'Send the mind of the people up the river down to me, and the people down the river (the Presbyterians) may go to hell, and I care not.' Mrs. Stid, at the same meeting, [prayed]: 'O Lord, take Capt. Buck by the nape of the neck and shake him over hell until his teeth chatter like a raccoon.'"¹⁹⁷

Lewis's fellow preachers viewed him as uneducated and rough while often combative against those who did not agree with him. "The first sermons heard in Jackson [which was also part of Willingborough Township in the early settlement period] were those of Elder Nathaniel Lewis, a Methodist. It is said that he did not appear to be a man like Paul, 'brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,' though, doubtless, he was a good man. Whatever his text might be, after a short introduction, to fight fatalism, was always the subject and object of his discourse."¹⁹⁸ His opposition to predestination and to determinism fit comfortably with the emphasis of Free Will Baptists who were also successful in the region and took many of his members.¹⁹⁹

uary 17, 1840." Chaffee, who wrote after Nathaniel Lewis's death, still referred to him as "a local deacon," but also wrote that John Hilborn "advised Lewis to procure a license to preach in conforming with the rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Mr. Lewis being a firm believer in the doctrines of Methodism and fully competent to teach. He was talented, laborious, and had much to do with the planting of Methodism in these parts." Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 48, writing after Nathaniel Lewis's death, still referred to him as "a local deacon."

¹⁹⁶Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, 543.

¹⁹⁷Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, 543.

¹⁹⁸Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 469.

¹⁹⁹Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 429, 469.

When John Gould, who would later become a follower of Joseph Smith, was busily establishing Free Will Baptist congregations in 1818, he drew primarily from Nathaniel Lewis's Methodists in the same areas and formed a group in Choconut village in Susquehanna County.²⁰⁰

One day when Nathaniel Lewis was preaching to a small group of individuals in the area, "some unruly boys disturbed the meeting to such an extent that the elder's patience gave way, and he upbraided them as the most hogmatical set of scoundrels he ever saw. On being told that there was no such word in common usage, the elder said, I don't care, it was applicable."²⁰¹

Outside observers were not always impressed by the Methodists who generally included more of the poor and uneducated in the valley than other congregations. Zenanah Gilbert, who attended a Methodist camp meeting in the area in 1810, described her experience:

Sunday early in the morning Brother Ths [Thomas] Sister F [Fanny] and myself set off for to go to a Methodice field Meeting we call at the Post and [pick up numerous others with the wagon at several locations] . . . and by this time we have a good load we get caught in a violent shower and get completely wet when we arive at the plase intendet for devotion we see about 3 thousand people there to hear a verry vulgar man talk and tell his experiences some it seams went there for the purpose of worshipping God some for pretents and some to make show and some to see what they could find to make a ridicule of indeed the methodice behave verry unbecoming and I was verry glad to retire from the crowd.²⁰²

In a letter describing a camp meeting in the valley in the fall of 1824, the writer "prayed those who had gone for sport might find God."²⁰³

While Lewis maintained the operation of the local congregation, circuit riders continued to come through the valley. Reverend Loring Grant became responsible for the Tioga Circuit in 1810, the year it became part of the Genesee Conference, and regularly rode to thirty meeting places to preach to gathered congregations. Grant held his meetings in both the

²⁰⁰Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 429.

²⁰¹Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 485, emphasis in original.

²⁰²Zenanah Gilbert, *Diary*, September 2, 1810, Special Collections, Dickinson College.

²⁰³George B. Cone to Electa Jewett, letter, Fall 1824, Susquehanna County Historical Society.

Comfort home on the east end of the township in the village of Lanesville (John Comfort joined the Methodists in 1809) and the Hale home on the west end of Harmony Township near the hamlet of Taylortown.²⁰⁴ Grant likely preached at the Comfort home in the morning hours and the Hale home in the afternoon hours to keep up his long list of scheduled preaching locations downriver.

In 1811, when Samuel Thompson became the circuit rider through the Susquehanna Valley, David Hale joined the Methodists at age seventeen. His sister Emma began attending the Methodist classes that same year.²⁰⁵ Emma became “a member of a class in the Methodist Episcopal Church when only seven years old. A missionary spirit was hers from her birth.”²⁰⁶ While her family was not involved in Methodism until at least a year after her birth, Emma was likely raised within a shouting context. A man who lived seven miles upriver from the Hale family and knew little of their personal religious devotion, still may have accurately ascribed to them a general Methodist approach to religion in the region when he noted how Emma Hale as a little girl, “often got the power,” as did most of those with

²⁰⁴Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 36; John Comfort to Silas Comfort, Harmony, September 25, 1847, John Comfort Correspondence, George Fisk Comfort Papers, Syracuse University Special Collections.

²⁰⁵Inez A. Kennedy, *Recollections of the Pioneers of Lee Count*, (Dixon, Ill.: Inez A. Kennedy, Publisher, 1893), 142; Mark H. Forscutt, “Commemorative Discourse on the Death of Mrs. Emma Bidamon,” *The Saints’ Herald* (July 15, 1879): 209–17.

²⁰⁶Forscutt, “Commemorative Discourse on the Death of Mrs. Emma Bidamon”; see also, Paul V. Ludy, ed., *A Tribute To Emma* (Bates City, Missouri: Paul V. Ludy and Associates, 2002), 5. Although most of what Forscutt shares about Emma’s life comes from previously published sources and he clearly confuses some of the historical information, he also had conversations with her about her life from time to time. See Mark Hill Forscutt, Journal, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University: “Had a very interesting conversation with Sis. Emma, who was more than ordinarily communicative,” December 4, 1867; and “Visited Mrs. Bidamon, relict of Joseph Smith the Martyr. I learned from her many facts relative to her husband, Joseph,” August 1, 1875. Shortly after Emma’s death, Forscutt spent five days writing up his history of Emma while living with her son Joseph III. His information on Emma’s early conversion appears to be part of what he learned directly from her.

sincere religious feelings in the valley.²⁰⁷

J. B. Buck noted most residents of the valley were drawn into Methodism during this early period, but religious enthusiasm quickly waned as the fires of conviction soon died down and the valley’s residents largely returned to their previous indifference.²⁰⁸ Some members of the Hale family continued their persistent involvement in religion despite the declining interest. Nathaniel Lewis and other Methodist preachers still held their camp meetings in the hollows and forests of the Endless Mountains, where “the cries of the penitents were followed by shouts of deliverance.”²⁰⁹

Elisha Bibbins and Marmaduke Pearce, brother-in-law to influential Shouting Methodist George Lane, briefly became the circuit riders for the valley in 1812 and continued to encourage grove experiences.²¹⁰ They promised the faithful they could receive direct answer to prayer.²¹¹ Bibbins

²⁰⁷Arthur B. Deming, ed., “W. R. Hine’s Statement,” *Naked Truths About Mormonism* 1 (January 1888): 2.

²⁰⁸Isaac Hale’s friend and associate John Comfort consistently wrote his son Silas Comfort expressing hope that the situation would change. He concluded on February 29, 1836, “Religion at a very Low ebb with us little or no spirit in the members and of course a great indifference among the congregation.” John Comfort, letter to Dear Children, Harmony, February 29, 1836. He continued to express similar discouragement in his letters for the next decade, such as when he noted, “poor Backsliden Lanesboro is left to mourn her bareness and Distance from her Duty and privilege.” John Comfort, letter to Dear Children, April 8, 1837, and “it is poor wicked Lanesboro still.” John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, March 28, 1838. When James Newman died and was buried in the cemetery west of the Hale home that now bears his name, John Comfort wrote “he was taken a corps into the Chapel the first time he ever entered it.” John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, February 29, 1848.

²⁰⁹Larry C. Porter, “Reverend George Lane—Good ‘Gifts,’ Much ‘Grace,’ and Marked ‘Usefulness,’” *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 327.

²¹⁰Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 37.

²¹¹Silas Comfort, a boy who grew up with Emma and who attended church with his parents in her family’s home, preached in the late 1820s and early 1830s. His protégé Silas Comfort Swallow described himself as “a child of many prayers, my father having been a Methodist Class Leader and my mother an old time shouting Methodist, with a consistent life behind it, that shouted equally as loud. She believed in direct answer to prayer, and spent much time at a throne of grace.” *III Score & X or Selections, Collections, Recollections of Seventy Busy*

was a man of medium size with a prominent nose and “benignant eyes” who was so successful in his efforts to invite the interested to seek God in prayer that a local hunter found these Shouting Methodists praying in the woods disruptive and insisted “they frightened the deer away [as] he came upon praying people everywhere.”²¹²

While Hale family members continued to participate in these meetings, some members of the family may have been among the many backsliders in the valley. Even Nathaniel Lewis was criticized by his congregation. One Sabbath morning in the year 1812 when provisions were scarce, he sat reading his Bible preparatory to preaching, when Lewis discovered a deer near his house. He took down his gun, shot the deer, and after dressing it, sent portions to his neighbors. Lewis was called to account before the church for breaking the Sabbath. He pleaded not guilty. He asked the brethren who were gravely remonstrating with him: “What do you suppose the Lord sent that deer into my field for?” “Well, I suppose it was to try you,” one gravely answered. “No, it wasn’t,” replied the accused, “for the Lord knows that when he sends blessings to me I don’t wait until the next day before I take them.” Lewis was acquitted.²¹³

Alva Hale used the Sabbath as a day for target shooting, and his father, Isaac, often found himself in the woods hunting.²¹⁴ One day, when Elisha Bibbins was the circuit rider, Isaac came across his daughter Emma in the woods while out hunting. “Mr. Hale always claimed that he was converted from deism to faith in Christ as the Savior, by a secret prayer of Emma’s, when she was but seven or eight years old, which he accidentally (*sic*) overheard when just entering into the woods to hunt. In the course of her prayer she besought the Lord in behalf of her father, and the force and efficacy of that prayer entered into his heart with such power as to lead him to faith in Christ the Lord.”²¹⁵ Isaac’s commitment changed as he “listened to the wailings of her young heart in his behalf” while Emma prayed aloud in

Years (Harrisburg, Pa.: United Evangelical Publishing House, 1904), 30.

²¹²Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 138.

²¹³Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 49.

²¹⁴“Trial Notes Scribe A” and “Trial Notes Scribe B.”

²¹⁵Vogel, “Michael Morse Interview with William W. Blair, 8 May 1879,” *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:343–44.

the woods as the preachers encouraged.²¹⁶

By the time George Peck became the circuit rider coming through the Susquehanna Valley in 1816, he held his meetings in the home of “Brother Hale.” Peck found in the region “such weeping and shouting [as] I have seldom heard or witnessed.”²¹⁷ The village of Hopbottom (named after the prolific hops that grew in the area), twenty-four miles south of the Hale home, became known as Hoppingbottom, “as illustrative of the manner in which the Methodists exhibited their joy, in times of the outpouring of the Spirit, in leaping up and down.”²¹⁸ When Peck preached a sermon in the parlor of the Hale home, he based it on Isaiah 12:6, “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitants of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”²¹⁹

Emma’s influential prayer seems to not only have made a difference for her father, but her “missionary spirit” seems to have influenced others as well. George Peck recalled, during the years he was a circuit rider preaching in the Hale home, how his own fourteen-year-old sister developed a similar missionary enthusiasm. She invited her uncle to a Methodist meeting, and “when he heard his young niece begin to pray he was amazed. It was the effectual, fervent prayer which prevails. She gave God glory for his boundless love to sinners.”²²⁰ As he heard this prayer, the uncle resolved to give up his sins similar to Isaac Hale’s example a few years earlier.

²¹⁶Forscutt, “Commemorative Discourse on the Death of Mrs. Emma Bidamon.”

²¹⁷Peck, *Life and Times*, 137.

²¹⁸Peck, *Early Methodism*, 306. The village post office officially changed the name of the village from Hopbottom to Waterford in 1823 but in 1825 it changed again to Brooklyn although locals continued for many years to refer to it as Hopbottom.

²¹⁹George Peck listed the text of each sermon he delivered in the Hale home in a “Memorandums” booklet he kept for each place he stopped on his circuit. He recorded the place and text of each sermon presumably so he wouldn’t repeat a sermon in the same location. Other sermons he listed under the name “Isaac Hales” as having preached in the Hale home were based on the texts, “Luke 11:28, Rom. 4:5 . . . Nahum 1:7, Romans 10:1, Luke 11:1, [and] John 21:15.” Sermons preached in “Sela Paynes” home a little over a mile east of the Hales’ were based on the texts “Sam. 21:31, Isa. 40:1, [and] James 4:8.” George Peck, “Memorandums of Circuit Travels, 1816–1818.”

²²⁰Peck, *Life and Times*, 28–29.

The Hale Family Mansion

Legal Title for Hale Land

As the Hale family and their relatives in the valley joined Methodism one or two at a time over a period of several years, the son of Timothy Pickering Jr. died and Nathaniel Lewis moved his family into the larger Pickering home.²²¹ The Lewis family lived in the large home until Pickering sold it to John Comfort in 1808 and gave Lewis a year's notice to move his family out.²²² This happened just as land ownership in the valley shifted and the settlers were finally forced to resolve their land titles.

Robert H. Rose came into the valley in 1806 and may have introduced himself to Isaac when he arrived. Since Rose came to evaluate the valley as an investment, he would have contacted some of the settlers on the land he planned to buy. As he viewed the land, Rose pushed through thirty miles of woods, setting up a camp at a location occupied the week before by "some indians."²²³ His dress was "a hunting shirt, trousers and mockasons" which helped him blend in with the locals, such as Jesse Hale who was described as "six feet in his moccasins."²²⁴ Despite the backwoods clothing, however, the wealthy Rose had little in common with the Hale family or their neighbors, and he brought with him a notion of gentility then common in his native Philadelphia. He was "a man of refined taste, a poet, and a scholar."²²⁵ Rose set up camp in the woods and used a large box of chocolate as his chair while writing his fiancé a letter in which he promised her he would build her "a frame house, whose habitation ought to be a palace" on the mountain where he sat. He soon built her "an elegant mansion, on the bank of Silver lake, surrounded by one of the largest farms in the state."²²⁶

²²¹Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119.

²²²Upham, *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 4:119–23; Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 95.

²²³"Robert H. Rose to Miss Jane Hodge, August 21, 1806," Robert H. Rose Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Special Collections, Binghamton University.

²²⁴David Hale letter as cited in Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 104.

²²⁵Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: George W. Gorton, 1843), 621.

²²⁶Robert H. Rose, letter to Miss Jane Hodge, October 1, 1809; Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania*, 622.

Based on his several letters to his fiancé, Rose knew he would buy the land before he even investigated it, and shortly after his visit he bought the land owned by the Francis family of Philadelphia for \$75,000, including the tract owned by the Hales, and on February 18, 1809, Rose formalized a new deed.²²⁷ He registered his purchase a week later on February 25 and immediately contacted Isaac Hale and the other men who headed the 150 families on his property, demanding payment.²²⁸

Rose's men began mapping property on the north side of the river so it could be sold. "A surveyor in the employment of Dr. R. H. Rose, while tracing a boundary line through the woods, placed his hand high on a tree to mark where the ax-man, who followed, should strike out a chip as an evidence of the line that had been run. The surveyor had scarcely taken his hand from the tree, when the sharp crack of a rifle rang through the forest, and the spot where the hand had been laid was 'chipped' by a leaden bullet, a hint that sufficed to stay all proceedings for the rest of that day."²²⁹ Despite local opposition, the surveyors finished measuring the Rose land so it could be sold, including a 90 acre segment for Isaac Hale. The Hale property is carefully drawn in the Rose survey maps and labeled with Isaac Hale's name.²³⁰ While preparations to divide the Rose tract were underway, Isaac and his sons helped finish the Lewis family's new home in 1809

²²⁷"Robert H. Rose, letter to Isaac Hale, January 2, 1810," Deeds.

²²⁸Even though Rose was wealthy and from the Philadelphia elite, he was still influenced by popular culture of his day which suggests the cultural context of the Endless Mountains where the Hale family lived. He experienced some melancholy while he was away from his fiancé, Jane Hodge, and he wrote her of his homesickness, "Even the talisman around my neck, which I fondly thought would have defended me against all mischance, cannot shield me from this evil spirit . . . and [I] have sometimes suspected, that instead of being a guard against him ["a malicious gnome" or the "evil spirit"] it only adds to his power; so that I have been a whole day together afraid to behold it." Robert H. Rose, letter to Miss Jane Hodge, January 24, 1808. Rose overcame his melancholy feelings as he worked to create a place for his intended bride. He suggested to her the women in the valley were unusually strong and healthy, and he hoped if the sickly Jane were to come north and join him it would improve her health as well. Robert H. Rose, letter to Miss Jane Hodge, August 20, 1808.

²²⁹Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 23.

²³⁰See "Land Survey, R. H. Rose Survey Map," Bound Ledger, Rose Family Papers, Binghamton University Libraries Special Collections, Binghamton, New York.

on poor farmland south of the Susquehanna River and just east of a small creek (now Bedbug Creek). The creek was named Lewis Creek and ran down from Turkey Hill through Jameson Hollow (now Bedbug Hollow) until it emptied into the Susquehanna River. After the Lewis family had moved into their new home, they bought the property on March 14, 1810, where they had built the home and registered their deed that August.²³¹ At the same time, Rose pushed for Isaac Hale to buy his land.

Nine months after Robert Rose purchased much of the valley, Isaac Hale paid him one dollar on November 29, 1809, for 90 acres of land and agreed to a mortgage of \$340.92 for the remaining sum. Hale also bought an additional 40 1/2 acres of land from Caleb and Sarah Carmalt for \$101.00 but did not record the deed until he sold it years later to a son-in-law, Michael Morse.²³² The Carmalt addition was a section of land attached to the eastern edge of the Hale property above the land of Ezekiel and William Travis. Since Carmalt turned all of his uncollected debts to Rose when he left the valley, it is likely Hale purchased the Carmalt land through Rose as well. When the deeds were all registered and the debts paid, the 130 1/2 acre Hale farm included the 90 acre Rose section and 40 1/2 acre Carmalt section and was likely a subset of the original 150 acres for which Hale was taxed in 1798.

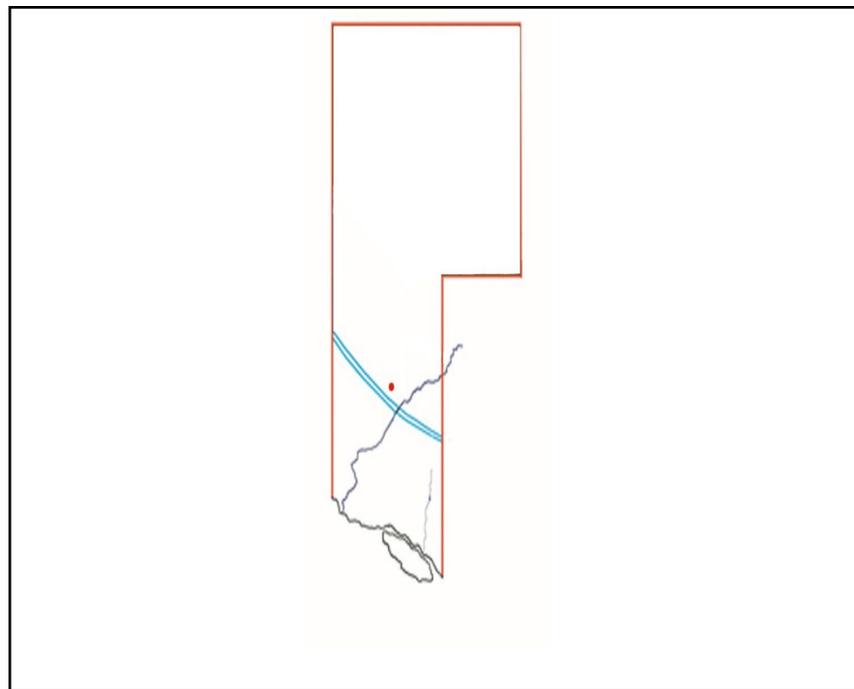
Rose charged the Hales \$3.79 an acre for their land which was more than ten times the amount Bennett initially paid for it and a dollar per acre higher than Rose charged Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's neighbors, suggesting he took advantage of the added value twenty years of Hale family improvements had given the land. This may help explain why Isaac Hale purchased less land than he occupied in 1798. Rose could be forceful in business affairs, and the local postman at the county seat found this new creditor cheated him.²³³ It was Rose who had inaccurately advertised wheat would

²³¹“William Drinker and Others Exects of Henry Drinker Deced to Nathaniel Lewis, August 6, 1810,” Deeds, Wilkes-Barre, Luzern County, Pennsylvania, 12: 223–27.

²³²“Caleb Carmalt & wife to Isaac Hale, July 31, 1833,” Deeds, Montrose, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.

²³³Sherman Day outlined Rose's management of Carmalt's lands and suggests he acted as an agent for Carmalt when the latter left the region. See Day, *Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania*, 619–24. Caleb Carmalt eventually transferred all of his unpaid mortgages to Robert H. Rose for collection, Caleb Carmalt Accounts, Rose Family Papers.

Post noted in his journal: “I thought R. H. Rose to be a gentleman & a man of



Outline of the Original Hale Farm. Dot marks Hale cabin location north of road.

grow so well in the valley. He recorded the purchase agreement with Isaac Hale in the county deed book on January 2, 1810, without noting when the payment or payments for the property fell due, or if Hale would pay the debt as a single lump sum or in regular installments over an extended period.²³⁴ The latter option was more likely since the Hale family only paid one dollar down and built a new, large frame home at about the same time. The home was remodeled in 1820–1822 which is likely when the debt on the land was paid. If correct, this places the Hale land payments at somewhere around \$35.00 a year for a decade.

honour & that his word might be depended upon but Alas! to my great mortification & surprise I find it greatly to the contrary. . . . If my children should ever read this I hope it may be a warning to them never to trust a mans word for if he is honest he is not a frad to be bound & if he is not he aught to be,” May 25, 1813, Isaac Post Diary May 1812–December 1814, Susquehanna County Historical Society.

²³⁴Robert H. Rose, letter to Isaac Hale, January 2, 1810, Deeds.

The Hale Family Builds Their Mansion

A little over a month after Isaac Hale arranged to purchase his land, a change in county government gave the Hale family a larger political voice. Pennsylvania created Susquehanna County on February 21, 1810, out of part of Luzerne County, and over the next year local citizens organized a government. On October 2, 1812, the men in the valley gathered in Lanesville at the home of John Comfort—the home Isaac Hale had built for Pickering—and they elected Comfort as Harmony Township’s Tax Assessor with Hale as his assistant.²³⁵ The two men quickly visited the farms and workshops in Harmony, Pennsylvania, relying on detailed standardized instructions to determine a value for each family’s property.²³⁶ Isaac Hale

²³⁵These men assessed real property in Harmony Township as directed in Section Eight of the General Assembly Act of April 11, 1799, implementing the tax laws that remained in place for many years (with some small revisions made in 1834 and 1844). Frank M. Eastman, *The Law of Taxation in Pennsylvania* (Newark, N.J.: Soney & Sage, 1909), 45–52. The law required that counties levy a tax on houses, mills, and various listed industrial sites. Farmers, ministers, and school masters were exempt from a tax on their trade. No one in Susquehanna County with a large number of acres of land was taxed for a trade, however, perhaps because the exemption for farmers provided a loophole against taxing anyone who included some farming among a variety of occupations. Horses, cows, and oxen were taxed, but mules, sheep, goats, and pigs were not. Shortly before the Hale family moved from Harmony, provisions were also enacted to tax pleasure carriages and watches, of which they had none.

²³⁶The letter has “one thousand eight hundred and ~~thirteen~~ fourteen” [1814] written which is likely a correction because of a wrong year added just after the change on January 1. It reads in part: “return to the undersigned commissioners for the county aforesaid at their office in Montrose in alphabetical order, the names and sir names of the taxable inhabitance (*sic*) in your township, and and (*sic*) of all the property within the same, made taxable, together with a just evaluation . . . viz. all Lands held by patent, warrant, location, or improvements; Houses and lots of ground, and groundrents; all gristmills, sawmills, hempmills, oilmills, snuffmills, papermills, and powdermills; all Furnaces, Forges, Bloomirzes [bloomeries], Distilleries, Sugarhouses, malthouses, Breweries, Tanningyards and farries [ferries]; all Negro and Maulatto slaves; all Horses mares geldings and Cattle above the age of four years, and all offices and posts of profit, trades and occupations, Ministers of the Gospel of Every Denomination and Schoolmasters only excepted.” Laban Capern and Johnah Brewster, letter to John Hilborn, January 24, 1814, 1813-1814 Tax Assessment Records, Harmony Township, Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania. Not included in this list but included in the original act



Remains of the stone portion of a stringer fence along the Carmalt eastern property line. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

were fulling mills, slitting mills, and rolling mills. Included in this list but not in the original directive was malt houses. Some of the later tax assessment booklets include a printed version of the General Assembly act with a list of taxable items that matches the handwritten one cited here rather than the formally published one that became part of the legal code in later years. The original tax booklet as prepared by Comfort and Hale included columns for different rates of land (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and unimproved) and a column each for houses, mills, horses, oxen, cows, and occupation. Since nothing was entered in the column for mills while the column for occupation only recorded single men (these were non-property holders who were included under a head tax), these columns were dropped the following year and industrial sites (sawmills) were specifically listed as a line item in future tax assessments.

taxed himself in this first assessment for two homes, the original log home and a new frame home.

Because Luzerne County tax assessments are missing for the period before Susquehanna County was created, there is a fourteen year gap without tax information on the Hale property. While the missing tax records allow the second Hale home could have been built any time before October 2, 1812, it is not likely it was built too many years before that date. The first large scale sawmill in the valley began operation in 1809.²³⁷ Since the Hales were under pressure from Pickering to build the Lewis home in 1809, and Methodist meetings were held in the Hale home as early as 1810, it is likely the Hale family finished building their own new frame home in early 1810, the same year they gained legal title to their property. Elizabeth delivered her last child, Reuben, on September 18, 1810.

When the Hale family built their new home, they slid the log home to a spot nearby (most likely the “yard” to the east of their home where outside work was typically done), where they lived until the new home was finished. Isaac straightened the original foundation for the log home by adding a wall in front of a previous curved foundation wall on the west side of the cellar.²³⁸ He dug out a larger area to expand the cellar with a kitchen

²³⁷The 1798 tax records list a couple of sawmills in Willingborough Township and indicates the valley had a few frame homes. But it is not clear how productive these mills were or how long they stayed in operation. Blackman (*History of Susquehanna County*, 95–96) believed John Comfort built the first sawmill in the valley in 1809. This was when Isaac helped build the Lewis home and just before he built his own. Since the Comfort mill was a large operation and stayed in business for many years, it is possible construction of the Comfort sawmill marked the point when lumber became inexpensive and readily available in the valley, making it possible for the Hale family to afford their “mansion.” Since Jesse and Ward Hale did not buy their sawmill until 1825, the family needed to cut lumber with a pit saw or buy it from another source to build their homes.

²³⁸Although most of this frame home later burned in an 1865 fire, and was rebuilt into an even larger home by the carpenter James Tillman in the early 1870s, there is enough evidence from the original frame home to determine some significant aspects of its appearance and character. After 1843 it is very difficult to get a sense of the value of homes on property since the homes are included with all real property into a single value. But an examination of overall land values suggests a modest drop in value between 1860–1861 from \$600 to \$575 which may indicate the removal of a rear kitchen or other modest structure on the property. In 1865 the tax assessment noted a significant drop in value from \$575 to \$475, and Jehiel Dayton sold the land to James M. Tillman in 1868.

in the new basement and added a new foundation on the east side of the cellar which included a stairway so the family could access the basement from bulkhead doors at ground level.²³⁹

When the Hales added a rear addition to their home between 1820 and 1822 to accommodate a ground level kitchen, they did not add a cellar under the new addition.²⁴⁰ The larger space attached to the rear of the home provided enough room for a pantry and kitchen sleeping chamber (the “borning room” of later generations) in addition to including a kitchen big enough to take care of most of the family’s needs with the basement kitch-

²³⁹Matt Kirk and Corey McQuinn, Hartgen and Associates, Inc. Archaeologists, personal communications to author, July and August 2014.

²⁴⁰Kirk and McQuinn, personal communications to author, July and August 2014. After Jesse Hale built a home on his father’s property, Isaac was taxed for three homes until he transferred twenty-six acres of his property to Jesse, and his son’s home was taxed separately. Isaac continued to be taxed on two homes from 1816 until 1819. On December 21, 1819, John Comfort assessed Isaac Hale a tax for three homes on his property. Many other land owners in the valley were taxed on an additional home that same year. Context suggests this tax was for sugar houses, special buildings where the residents distilled their maple sap into a usable product. “Sugar houses” were specifically listed as taxable operations, but the intent was to tax commercial enterprises instead of family operations. Comfort apparently disagreed. The following year, most of these additional “houses” were removed from the tax record, and the number of pounds of sugar produced on each property was included instead, confirming sugar houses were the focus of the tax. Isaac Hale’s assessment was not crossed out and lowered with the others, perhaps because his was considered a larger commercial-like operation. The following year, when Isaac Hale and John Hilborn were assessors, the Hale sugar house was dropped from the assessment and Isaac was taxed for 300 pounds of sugar—significantly more than any other individual in the township. He specifically mentioned in court testimony that one of his neighbors particularly liked his sugar. “Trial Notes Scribe A.” The high assessed value for his sugar house and high subsequent value for his sugar suggests the Hale family were major sugar producers in the valley, Tax Records 1819, 1820, and 1821. The value listed for the Hale’s under “house” jumped from \$20 to \$98 when the additional structure was included in 1819 but the value only dropped to \$40 in 1822. This continued the \$10 assessment for the log home and \$30 for the frame home. When the log home was dropped from the tax assessment, Isaac Hale continued to be taxed for a \$30 frame home until his death. This suggests the rear addition to the Hale frame home must have been added during that 1819–1822 period when there was fluctuation in the value of the Hale homes on their property.

en useful for cooking in the summer months.²⁴¹

The remains of the home's foundation suggest Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's frame home was 14 x 34 feet with a rear addition 12 x 24 feet. The artifact scatter east of the rear addition suggests it had a back porch on the east side of the home accessed by a kitchen door.

An 1857 hand drawn map of the Susquehanna Valley includes a stylized sketch of the Hale home depicting a structure similar to the one Timothy Pickering hired Isaac Hale to build for him.²⁴² Pickering designed a typical Federal style home for his "plantation" in the Susquehanna Valley that included a neatly balanced appearance. His carefully drawn plans for each floor of the home and elevation sketches for the building exterior depicted two main rooms with a typical window arrangement of two at the front of each room separated by a front door on the main level and five windows on the upper level in a common pattern for the period usually described by scholars as an "I-house" and sometimes described popularly as, "five, four, and a door." While the Pickering home included its stairway access at the rear, and had a third floor half-story level, because the Hale home rear was added later, it had the more common stairway pattern at the front of the home which divided two equal halves, and the 1857 rough sketch of the home depicts a two-story structure.

When Lucy Smith recalled years later her visit at the Hale home in autumn 1828, she described the home as a "mansion" that included "<every> convenient appendage necessary." Since the dimensions of the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale home and its proposed layout were similar to the Joseph and Lucy Smith frame home in Manchester, New York, Lucy must have focused on something other than size in her exuberant description. Lucy had her scribe insert "every" with a carat in front of "appendage" in her history, assuring the reader would not just imagine a few conveniences but "every" one. It was likely the array of comforts that impressed her most.

The only significant difference between Lucy Smith's home and Elizabeth Hale's home was the location of the stairway leading to the second floor and a full second story in the Hale home rather than a half-story such as was in the Smith home. As part of the "refinement of America" that took

²⁴¹These added kitchens were typically known as "work kitchens" until the 1840s. But although the term "summer kitchen" is anachronistic in this context, it is so widely known and helps to describe the purpose of the work kitchens that I've retained it here to refer to the extra kitchen that was part of the Hale home.

²⁴²Road Proposal, Court of Quarter Session of Peace, November, 16, 1857, Susquehanna County Courthouse.

place in Lucy Smith's childhood, the central stairway and the expansion of the upstairs as a social space in the home became important markers of "the rituals of polite society." Although the Hale family was only part of the "lesser gentry" that put them into the highest social level only in their remote valley, their refined home reflected well on their family.²⁴³

The comforts Lucy observed may have included running water. Plumbing brought water from a nearby well to the house in later years, and since the well was built early and the Hale family did not have a cistern under or near the house, a hand pump likely brought water directly from the well into the kitchen during Hale occupation to make the tasks of the women easier. Year-round running water in the home would have been a comfort worthy of notice.

Plans for the Pickering home included directions for a drain pipe from the kitchen sink to the outside and a "cloaths press" or closet to hold clothing for each of the main upstairs bedrooms. While drains were common and the Smiths likely had one as well, had Isaac followed the plans he received from Pickering on his own home, the kitchen could have had clean water coming in and out with ease. Closets in homes were an innovation of the period and would provide additional storage space.

There were also other features in the home that could have impressed Lucy. George Peck covered the sermon book he used in the Hale home with gold and blue wallpaper left over from someone's recent construction. If the Hale home included wallpaper it would have impressed.²⁴⁴ The Hale home became a civic center and a church as it was used for a variety of meetings.²⁴⁵ The Hale family left remnants of a high quality tea pot made of fine Jakefield pottery, a style of ceramics used by English royalty roughly

²⁴³Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 115.

²⁴⁴George Peck, "Memorandums of Circuit Travels, 1816–1818."

²⁴⁵"Court of appeal held at Isaac Hale's in Harmony," February 28, 1816, see "Tax Assessment Records, Harmony Township, 1815," Susquehanna County Courthouse. It is also likely the home had nice Venetian carpet that was then the height of fashion. Several of the Hales' neighbors made a living weaving, some producing skilled work, and the county encouraged carpet weaving—offering a prize at the annual fair for the best piece of carpeting, "Cattle Show and Fair," *Susquehanna County Herald*, 2, no. 18 (October 27, 1821): 141. During the investigation of the murder of Oliver Harper, Isaac Hale was called out of his home one evening barefoot. He had been relaxing in his home when he was called upon to walk to the neighboring Treadwell home to interview a neighbor. He did not have time to put his boots on before leaving his home. "Trial Notes Scribe A."



Hand-painted tea cup and Saucer, found on Hale Farm. Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

during the second half of the eighteenth-century (1740–1790). While there was not enough room in a small ox cart used by three families to bring such an unusual item from rural Vermont, unless it was a treasured wedding gift, it could have been a later gift of Timothy Pickering to the family or a second hand purchase as they prospered in business. The Hale family used fine mochaware bowls and mugs that included eye dazzling swirls of green and brown mixed with vibrant oranges, blues, and other colors, as evidence the family could afford the best ceramics available on the market and not just local product. Hand painted tea cups and saucers suggest the Hale women socialized in their home with other women from the valley. Journals from the region indicate women held tea parties frequently.²⁴⁶ Many fragments of white kaolin clay tobacco pipes suggest that men also

²⁴⁶See Lydia Dimock Searle, *Diary*, June 1832–Nov. 1833, Susquehanna County Historical Society, when she lived in the Susquehanna County Seat at Montrose and attended tea parties regularly; Electa Jewett, *Journal*, 1859–1865, Susquehanna County Historical Society, lived in neighboring Brooklyn Township (Hopbottom during the early Hale period). Born in 1790, she spent much of her later life attending tea parties and religious events. Melissa A. Tiffany, *Diary*, 1854, Susquehanna County Historical Society, mentioned attending one tea party; Julietta Stevens, *Journal*, April 1848–April 1853, mentioned attending parties, having boys call for dinner, and visitors over, but did not mention tea.



Musket strike plate (left); antler handle (right), found on Hale Farm, Collection of the LDS Church History Department. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

gathered at the home to socialize.²⁴⁷

The Established Hale Farm

Land Use

On December 27, 1828, Jesse Hale assessed a tax on his father's 130 1/2 acre farm (due to his rounding the figures, they totaled 131 acres). Isaac contested 40 acres of the assessment, arguing a son-in-law, Michael B. Morse, lived on 27 acres, and a son-in-law, Joseph Smith Jr., lived on 13 acres of the land, and they should pay the tax for their part of his property. Jesse reduced the value of Isaac Hale's land on appeal by \$150.00. He did not add any value (and hence no tax) to the Morse land but increased the Smith land value by \$150.00. This continued a struggle Joseph Smith faced

²⁴⁷Hartgen, "Report, Historic Sites, Church Historians Office," 2005; Hartgen, "Archeological Field Investigations and Addenda 1 and 2," Kirk and McQuinn, personal communication to author.

for several years over how his taxes were determined.

The 1828 assessment on the land included a detailed description of its use and, when combined with information from a 1937 aerial photograph and a careful walk of the property to discover stone fence remnants or land use details, gives a picture of how the Hales organized their land. Michael Morse's property consisted of 27 acres of unimproved land and a log home on the Oquago mountain foothills at the north end of the Hale farm. The land was rocky without a good soil base and could not be farmed, its only resource available to Morse was the old growth forest growing on its steep slopes.

Joseph Smith's 13 1/2 acres were rounded for tax purposes to 13 acres of improved land just south of the Morse property. The tax assessment noted the property had one acre of first rate land (this included the kitchen garden and work area surrounding his house), six acres of second rate pasture land in the flood plain along the river, and six acres of third rate rocky farmland and sugar maple groves at the north end of Joseph Smith's lot.

After contesting the 1828 assessment, Isaac was taxed for 63 acres of unimproved land and 28 acres of improved land, consisting of two acres of first rate land that included a kitchen garden and large work area around his house, 16 acres of second rate land along the river that included a pasture for his sheep, and ten acres of third rate land between his home and the mountain that included an orchard just north of his home, wetlands north of the orchard of little agricultural use except for as a fee area for pigs, and sugar maple trees in the rocky, ascending portions to the north.

Continued Use of the Hale Family Log Home

Before Isaac Hale and his family raised a new frame home on their first home's repaired foundations, they slid the log home to a spot nearby (most likely toward the well in the "yard" to the east of their home where outside work was typically done), where they lived until they finished their new home. Their log home was continuously taxed as a residence for many more years as others lived there, but the family did not build a foundation for the home when it was moved and allowed it to slowly decay. This second home gave the Hale family more living space; it provided a place for David Hale to live with his new bride after his marriage; it served as the Methodist church for a period; and it may have been the residence of some of the "money-diggers" that stayed in the area. The new Hale family frame home was not large enough to accomplish all of these tasks conveniently.

As a "middling mansion," the newly built frame home was full of

enough comforts to impress Lucy Smith, but not large enough for the family to live in high style. It had one roughly eight feet square chamber on the main level attached to the kitchen and either two large upstairs sleeping chambers ten feet deep by thirteen feet wide or four small upstairs chambers less than ten feet deep by six feet wide. The oldest sons of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale were mature when the family finished their frame home, and they may have preferred their independence staying in the log home where they had grown up.

In 1813 Jesse Hale turned twenty-one and reached legal adult age. He was taxed that year as a "single man," while he courted thirteen-year-old Mary (Polly) McKune who lived next door.²⁴⁸ In preparation for marriage, Jesse began building his own house on the southeastern edge of his father's farm between his parent's home and that of the McKunes (on what became the Joseph and Emma Smith property). Jesse purchased the property from his father and married Mary July 23, 1815. Jesse moved his fifteen-year-old bride immediately into her new frame home.

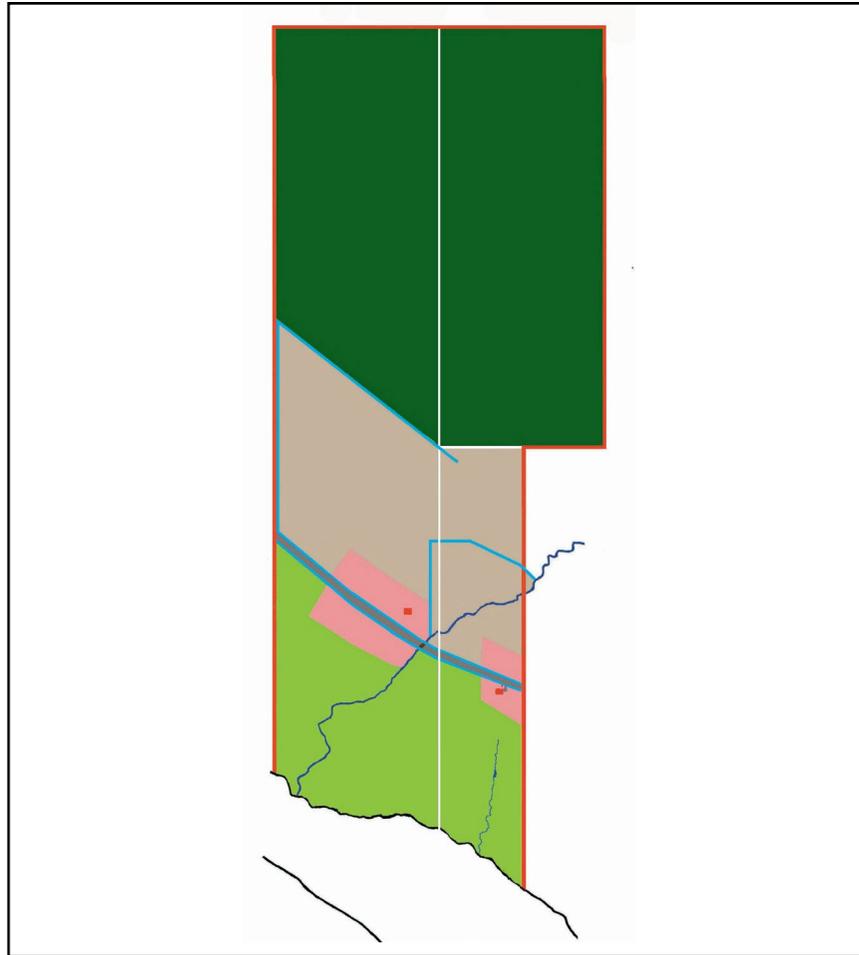
David Hale became a legal adult and was listed in the tax records for the first time as a "single man" on January 1, 1816. Although he did not purchase his own land, by the end of that year he was taxed for 54 acres without cattle or taxable houses. While the tax record did not indicate whose property David occupied, his store ledger notes his pigs did damage on Levi Westfall's property, and as the number of acres David paid taxes on went up or down, so also did the assessment on Westfall family property in an inverse relationship. This suggests David rented land over the next decade from Levi Westfall who farmed with his father James two farms east of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's farm.²⁴⁹

Jesse and Alva Hale were both listed in the 1820 census as heads of household while twenty-six-year-old David was included in his father's household as an unnamed individual listed in his age category. Even though he was farming rented land nearby, David was still tied to his father, and his father paid taxes on both homes as residences on his property.²⁵⁰ Twenty-nine-year-old David married his neighbor Rhoda Jane Skinner in 1822. David was "tall and straight, with eyes bright and brown, and hair dark

²⁴⁸Jesse Hale, Harmony Tax Assessment, Susquehanna County, 1813.

²⁴⁹See extended online version of Staker and Jensen, "David Hale's Store Ledger."

²⁵⁰Isaac Hale, Harmony Township, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, U.S. Census, 1830.



Land use of area. Hale Farm, left of center line; Morse Farm, top right of center line; Smith Farm, bottom right of center line. 1828 Susquehanna County Tax Records.

almost black.” He looked much like his sister Emma with whom he had a close relationship. Rhoda was born the same year as Emma and the two were age mates who lived on neighboring farms and likely interacted together a great deal.²⁵¹ Since Isaac expected his sons to provide a home for their new brides, it is likely David and Rhoda lived in the Hale log home. This conclusion is supported by a shift in the tax record on December 31, 1823, when David was taxed for one house and his father’s assessment

²⁵¹*The Saints’ Herald* (April 9, 1935): 465.

dropped from two houses to one.²⁵² David’s financial ledger from the period also indicates his store was on or near his father’s property by 1824, and the log home is the only candidate for both a residence and store.²⁵³

George Peck wrote notes on each sermon he delivered at “Isaac Hale’s,” he recalled he “preached at . . . old Brother Hale’s,” and he mentioned, “Mr. Hale gave me a cordial reception, and in the afternoon I preached in a little log school-house to a small but earnest congregation.” Peck must have used the log home on the Hale property for some of his sermons. The log home would have included a large open space that was useful for such types of gatherings. If so, it served as school, church, and residence for a period.²⁵⁴

On May 27, 1823, James Westfall died.²⁵⁵ Although after his death James was initially still assessed a tax for his 394 acres, which his sons Levi and Daniel Westfall paid on December 17, 1824, he was removed from the tax lists and David Hale was taxed for his 394 acres. David rented the entire James Westfall property in 1825 and thus controlled the potential silver mine on the Westfall farm.²⁵⁶ The Westfall family continued to pay

²⁵²Isaac Hale, Tax Assessment, Harmony Township, Susquehanna County, Pa., 1823 and 1824.

²⁵³For details about David Hale’s store, see Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger.” In addition to the daybook, the 1820 census that included David as part of his father’s household also documented the business activities of each household. The census enumerator could assign one of three categories of business: agricultural, commercial, or manufacturing. He indicated Jesse Hale’s household was involved in agriculture while Isaac Hale’s household was involved in commerce. While in 1820 this may have principally been Isaac Hale’s meat trading in major commercial markets in the southern part of the state, it may have also been an early indication of David Hale’s store operation, 1820 U.S. Census, Harmony, Pennsylvania.

²⁵⁴Peck, *Life and Times*, 68; George Peck, “Memorandums of Circuit Travels, 1816–1818;” Peck, *Early Methodism*, 256. Peck notes that the woman who taught at the school attended the services but lived in Windsor and commuted to work. She likely lived at the school during the week.

²⁵⁵James Westfall’s headstone stands in the cemetery known today as the McKune cemetery just east of the Joseph Smith property. The graveyard was already in use a decade before the McKune family moved into the valley.

²⁵⁶See “Timothy Pickering to Levi and James Westfall, June 15, 1825,” Susquehanna County Property Deeds, 5: 418–19; “Samuel and Mary Hodgdon to James Westfall, April 21, 1823,” Susquehanna County Property Deeds, 23: 615–16; Israel and Patty Skinner to Joseph McKune, Susquehanna County Prop-

the tax for the James Westfall home indicating someone, likely the Widow Westfall, continued to live there.

The Westfall farm had been of local interest for years. It was among the earliest land occupied by white settlers in the valley. Blackman noted, “William Smith arrived in the valley the same year as Isaac Hale and occupied the land east of him later purchased by the Westfall family.”²⁵⁷ It is possible William Smith was already on the property when Isaac Hale arrived since Pennsylvania surveyed the Smith property early during the Pennamite Wars—on either July 2, 1784, with Jacob Smith’s neighboring tract of land in number 236, or on April 4, 1785 with George Ruper’s land,

erty Deeds, 23:616. Josiah Stowell may have paid the rent for the land listed in David Hale’s name. This would explain the August 23, 1877, account reported by the *Bainbridge Republican* that relied heavily on William Purple’s account of Joseph Smith’s trial for glass looking, but may have had other sources at its disposal as well. The author wrote, “Meantime Deacon Stowell purchased a farm at Susquehanna and moved his family there from Afton. The young prophet was installed therein not exactly to the satisfaction of the other members of the family. Smith, by the aid of his magic stone, ascertained that many years before a band of robbers had buried a box of treasure in certain flat lands on the deacon’s farm.” “Joe Smith’s Youthful Days. Deacon Stowell’s Long Hunt for God—His Belief that Smith Could See Fifty Feet into the Earth,” *Bainbridge Republican*, August 23, 1877, 2; reprinted in *Montrose Democrat*, September 19, 1877. If this account is accurate, it places members of the Stowell family living in a home in the valley as well. But I have not been able to reconcile the known data with this possibility. It may be that more than one house was rented during the digging process and Jeriah Mumford & Co. took over all of these houses (see below).

²⁵⁷Emily Blackman, “Susquehanna County,” in William H. Egle, ed., *An Illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: De Witt C. Goodrich & Co., 1876), 1019. I have not been able to confirm this purchase in the land deed records. Since William Smith continues to be listed in the “Unseated Lands” section of the tax assessments year after year while the Westfall family is also taxed for property, it appears the purchase was never properly recorded and the transfer clearly noted. Emily Blackman notes William Smith sold the property in 1800 to James Westfall, and there is nothing in the sources that contradicts her conclusion as to the chain of title. Clarke suggest William Smith married Moses Comstock’s daughter and settled in the valley in 1791, the year after he notes Hale and Lewis settled the valley. Clarke, “Methodist Episcopal Church, Lanesboro, Penn.” Susquehanna County Historical Society. Since Isaac Hale was in the valley several years before he settled it with his family, it is likely he arrived after Hale was first there. But since Moses Comstock was the acknowledged first settler of the valley, the dating of William Smith’s arrival is not firmly established.

part of which was later purchased by Isaac Hale.²⁵⁸ William Smith was sometimes known as “Governor” with his 364 acres.²⁵⁹ Jacob Smith was sometimes assessed a tax as Joseph Smith but it is not clear if that was his alternate name or the name of his son. This Joseph Smith was first assessed for 434 acres in 1823.²⁶⁰

The similarity in names between this Smith family and Isaac’s later son-in-law Joseph Smith has caused some confusion over the years. For example, when the company of cartographer F. W. Beers made his map of the township in 1872, he marked the “Foundations of 1st Morman (*sic*) Temple” on what had been Jacob/Joseph Smith land. Doing so, he apparently jumped to conclusions about a temple site because of the Joseph Smith names. Emily Blackman rejected his assumptions when she noted in her history a few years after the map was published the foundations were for an African College.²⁶¹

Before James Westfall purchased the large William Smith tract, it served as a local landmark with its three ancient apple trees near what were believed to be “traces of an Indian village.”²⁶² After Westfall purchased the property from Smith, it did not have the apple trees; but, according

²⁵⁸See “Warrantee Names, R. H. Rose Survey Map.”

²⁵⁹See Harmony Township tax records for unseated lands for Jacob, William, and Joseph Smith, Unseated lands for William Smith (364 acres) and Jacob Smith (401 acres) 1815 recorded for January 1816 assessment; 1820 it is William 364 and Jacob 402.

²⁶⁰Tax Assessment, December 31, 1823 for 1824 Season,” Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania. Joseph McKune was the assessor and Jesse Hale was the assistant assessor. The William and Jacob Smith assessments were adjusted in 1825 by Jesse Hale for the 1826 season. Had this individual been Joseph Smith Jr., or his father, the Hale family would have known of it and noted it to family members that later recorded affidavits. Jesse Hale noted in his assessment of December 1827 that Joseph Smith had arrived since the last assessment while he continued to assess a tax on a Joseph Smith for 434 acres that same year and subsequent years. See discussion below of this Joseph Smith land in 1832 for additional insight.

²⁶¹F. W. Beers and Company, *Atlas of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania* (New York: A. Pomeroy, 1872), 17; Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 105. The Beers map has continued to influence some historians of Mormonism. Wilford C. Wood later purchased a portion of this property and suggested it was the site where the Melchizedek Priesthood had been restored, presumably influenced by the 1874 atlas, see Historic Site Files, CHL.

²⁶²Dubois and Pike, *Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 73.

to Blackman, he still found on it “the poles of the wigwams and several pits containing charred corn and an immense quantity of clippings, showing that arrow-heads were manufactured here on a large scale.”²⁶³ George Catlin interviewed a Native American man while producing his famous paintings, and the man told Catlin his family had to leave the region when he was a young man and they could not take everything with them. He watched his father “bury a ‘kettle of gold’” but kept it secret for many years. The tree that marked the spot had been cut down when he shared his story with Catlin and the old man could not tell him where it was buried. But when Catlin’s neighbor turned up a brass kettle with his plow, he thought that might have been the one he heard about and “returned it to the Indians.”²⁶⁴ Blackman observed of the Westfall property, “On the draft of a survey made by a Pennsylvania agent in 1785, six small wigwams are marked . . . to designate an old town of the Tuscaroras.”²⁶⁵ She was likely incorrect about the tribal affiliation of the ruins, since others have argued the Onondaga lived on the west side of the Susquehanna River and the Tuscarora lived on the east side. But her placement of the ruins on the Westfall property is supported by early sources.²⁶⁶ The map Blackman described marking the town suggests it was a small settlement and it was likely affiliated with the larger community at Oquago to the north—the connection between the two places may explain the name of Oquago Mountain.

If David Hale did not have access to the Westfall home, as the tax records suggest, his parent’s log home was not his only other option. David’s brother Jesse Hale moved across the river to a new home downstream by his sawmill, and in 1825 Jesse paid a tax for both of his homes as occupied structures. Isaac did not pay the tax for the log home and it may have been used by others who paid the tax for that home.

Numerous contemporary sources suggest a large group of treasure diggers stayed on the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale property in 1825 and perhaps as early as 1824. Isaac apparently rented out his log home to these groups of men to make some money, and he may have even briefly been “a little deluded” in involving himself in their search for buried relics and mon-



Almon Munson’s Tavern. Mary S. and John W. Park, present owners. Photograph by Mark L. Staker.

ey.²⁶⁷ Since his son David was renting the Westfall property and involved in later contract arrangements, it is likely David was also involved for a time. Not everyone in the Hale family participated in the search for silver, however, as Isaac’s brother-in-law Nathaniel Lewis seems to have separated his family from these efforts. Lewis had some exposure to the use of divining rods in the search for treasure while living in Wells, Vermont, and the scant evidence suggests he had rejected these efforts early. Lewis was later particularly critical of Joseph Smith’s “spectacles” used to translate rather than his theology or claims of angelic visitations, which may have been an outgrowth of Lewis’s Vermont experiences (or may have been a reflection of the similarity between Shouting Methodist expectations and Joseph Smith’s results). But Isaac, who did not have the same experiences in Ver-

²⁶³Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 102.

²⁶⁴Catlin, *Life among the Indians*, 45–48.

²⁶⁵Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 102.

²⁶⁶See Dubois and Pike, *Centennial of Susquehanna County*, 72.

²⁶⁷Blackman’s use of the phrase “a little deluded” suggests in her published history the Hale family initially believed Joseph Smith’s revelations. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103. But in her draft history she also suggests Isaac Hale was briefly involved in treasure digging activities as well.

mont, and had resisted full involvement in Methodism for several years even when Lewis preached and promoted it, apparently had an independent spirit and was not inclined to adopt his brother-in-law's perspective. But his involvement in the search for the mine may not have been more than an economic relationship as he rented out living space.

Some historians have speculated the Stowell work party stayed in "Elizabeth Hale's tavern" when they arrived.²⁶⁸ While contemporary sources indicate the group of workmen stayed on the Hale property for an extended period, the Hale family did not own a tavern, and archaeology suggests there was no room in their frame home for a large number of guests for an extended period. Tavern owners needed a license from the county to operate their business. But the Hale family was never issued a tavern license. Almon Munson's tavern in Taylortown, two and one-quarter miles west of the Hale home, was the only one near the Hale home in 1824–1825.²⁶⁹ It was in the Munson tavern where the Hale family's neighbors regularly gathered for activities, and it was in the Munson Tavern where Isaac Hale sat on the Grand Jury investigating Jason Treadwell for the murder of Oliver Harper in 1824.²⁷⁰ That tavern building still stands today.²⁷¹ Charles Hatch operated a tavern in Lanesville, three miles east of the Hale farm, but not until 1828–1829.²⁷²

Archaeology did not recover drinking mugs or other implements on the Hale property typically found at tavern sites.²⁷³ George Peck preached

²⁶⁸Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804–1879* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1984), 8.

²⁶⁹August 1824 Session, Quarter Sessions Docket, 1824–1832, Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

²⁷⁰"Trial Notes of Scribe A" and "Trial Notes of Scribe B."

²⁷¹I am grateful to Mary Parks for giving me access to the tavern and helping foster research on the history of the Susquehanna Valley in numerous ways.

²⁷²This area of Harmony Township was originally known as Lane's Mills, but was known as Lanesville during the 1820s, and in 1829 became Lanesboro, the name it still holds today. See Emily Blackman, "Susquehanna County," 1090. Charles Hatch's 1828–1829 tavern was evidently a log structure and likely related to the log tavern Sylvanus Hatch in neighboring Great Bend Township. "Tax Assessment, Great Bend Township, 1823," Susquehanna County Courthouse.

²⁷³Hartgen, "Report," and Hartgen "Archeological Field Investigations." While the site did not yield wine glasses or other drinking paraphernalia common

sermons in the Hale home or homes, and pious Methodists looked down on tavern keepers as not devout Christians.²⁷⁴ The frame home was also too small to accommodate the large Hale family and long-term additional guests.

The best candidate for a residence for the treasure diggers is the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale log home. Isaac Hale noted the "money-diggers' boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine."²⁷⁵ Hale could have meant by "board" either taking meals somewhere or regularly sleeping somewhere for an extended period.²⁷⁶ Both meanings were used

to tavern sites, it did yield an abundance of white clay pipe stems and bowl fragments often found at tavern sites. Since the Lewis family, as were many Methodists, had been early promoters of temperance, but did not condemn tobacco use, the artifact pattern more likely reflects their use of the site as a Methodist meeting house than a public house. See Julia A. King, "A Comparative Midden Analysis of a Household and Inn in St Mary's City, Maryland," *Historical Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1988): 17–39. King notes, drawing on her own work and that of other archaeologist, that while rural taverns show more evidence of food preparation in the archaeological record than do urban taverns, there is still an abundance of ceramic fragments for drinking paraphernalia along with those for other "socializing" activities, such as group smoking, at both types of taverns (18).

²⁷⁴See the comments of Methodist James Hamilton, Esq., in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, Letter, April 11, 1818, Thomas Hamilton Papers (1789–1830), Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

²⁷⁵Isaac Hale, "Affidavit," *The Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian*, May 1, 1834, 1; see also "Mormonism," *The Republican*, 3, no.10 (July 23, 1835): 1, where the affidavits are reprinted. Emily Blackman cites Isaac's affidavit verbatim in her preliminary draft of her *History of Susquehanna County*, but makes some minor changes and introduces errors in dating in her published version, Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 581. Joseph Smith Jr., who was a passive employee of Stowell, said, "I was put to board with a Mr. Isaac Hale, of that place," *JSP*, H1:236. Others also consistently agreed the workmen boarded with Isaac Hale. Joseph's mother, Lucy, noted, "he boarded a short time with one Isaac Hale," Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 361. Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's son-in-law Michael Morse recalled it was Isaac Hale's house where "Mr. Stowell, Joseph and the other hired men boarded," Vogel, "Michael Morse Interview with William W. Blair, 8 May 1879," *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:342.

²⁷⁶"Boardable," sense III definitions 8 and 9, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 341. A word search using Google's n-gram feature elicited numerous examples of "boarding" used in both senses during the period in which Joseph stayed in the Susquehanna Valley.

in local contexts at the time.²⁷⁷ He could have meant by “my house” either his log home or his frame home. Isaac did not indicate the men stayed at his residence, while in the same affidavit he noted his daughter Emma and her husband Joseph lived with him briefly until “they would move out, and reside upon a place near my residence.”²⁷⁸

The best circumstantial argument for the Hale family using their log

²⁷⁷Boarding was used to refer to meals in the local newspaper. Margaret McColum placed an advertisement in the paper in 1824 in response to her husband’s previous advertisement claiming she had “left his bed and board.” Margaret quipped, “ELIAS never had a bed; and as to eatables, he never furnished any except Beans & Jonny Cake without Salt; which cannot, with any propriety, be denominated ‘board.’” “Error Corrected,” *Susquehanna County Republican*, June 29, 1824, 3, italics in original. During the Jason Treadwell murder trial, part of the testimony hinged on Treadwell’s eating breakfast at the Hale home the morning after the murder. Emma Hale was subpoenaed to testify, but Isaac gave details about the breakfast in his testimony, and Emma was not called. “Commonwealth vs. Jason Treadwell.” This suggests that Emma was in the room at breakfast while the other women in the household were not, and she may have provided “board” for guests in the home—including the Josiah Stowell work party. If Joseph Smith met Emma while eating, it appears that he sought other occasions to visit her at home. His mother recalled after Joseph first met Emma, “he immediately commenced paying his addresses.” Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 361. MacKay, et al. agreed with Lucy Smith’s account, arguing Joseph began courting while still at the Hale farm, stating “a group of ‘money diggers’ boarded at his [Isaac’s] house [when]... JS [Joseph Smith] began courting Hale’s daughter Emma.” Michael Hubbard MacKay, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, Grant Underwood, Robert J. Woodford, and William G. Hartley, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents Volume 1: July 1828—June 1831* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 347. But Lucy, who was not there at the time, may have misunderstood Joseph’s recounting the events, since Isaac Hale suggested that it was “After these occurrences, [when the treasure diggers abandoned the project and left, that] young Smith made several visits at my house” to court his daughter. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 578, emphasis added.

²⁷⁸The home they moved into was a frame home built by Isaac’s son Jesse. Isaac’s distinction between “my house” and “near my residence” is similar to a later account by one of Emma’s Lewis cousins whose family was also taxed for two houses on their property. Joseph Lewis recalled his childhood home where he lived with his father, Nathaniel Lewis, as “our home and residence,” Joseph and Hiel Lewis, “Mormon History. A New Chapter, About to Be Published,” *Amboy Journal*, April 30, 1879, 1. A digital copy is available at, <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/IL/miscill3.htm#043079>.

home briefly as rental property comes immediately after the 1825 tax assessment when Isaac Hale no longer pays taxes for the log home but Jeriah Mumford & Co. comes into the valley and rents four homes. While Mumford was in the township David Hale was not taxed for a residence.²⁷⁹ Jeriah Mumford also paid taxes on the 434 acres of unseated lands (not occupied) for which the Joseph Smith connected to Jacob Smith was first taxed for in 1823. The Joseph/Jacob Smith land was apparently used for lumbering. Mumford owned a large lumbering company elsewhere in the county and along with the four residences in the Susquehanna Valley, the company also paid taxes on a sawmill.

When Mumford left Harmony Township in 1831, the 434 acres of unseated lands were initially listed again under Joseph Smith then Joseph was crossed out and Jacob was written above it. Jacob’s name continued in the tax lists through 1837 when the format of the tax assessments changed. The Hale log home never reappeared in the records and thus by the time Mumford left town in 1831 the building was no longer a residence and was repurposed to house animals or store supplies. It may have reached the end of its usefulness and was torn down.

The End of the Hale Farm

The Last Days of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale’s children all married, and each initially settled on or near the Hale farm. The aging parents continued to maintain the farm, but after the 1820–1822 remodel of their home there were no apparent material changes to their circumstances for their remaining years. John Comfort, a fellow Methodist and Isaac’s close companion in community leadership, regularly wrote to his son Silas, after he left their valley to study for the ministry, and described the changes in their community as they

²⁷⁹See Jirah Mumford & Co., in the Harmony Township Tax Assessment records from 1826–1831. Jirah Mumford was one of the earliest settlers in the Starrucca Valley east of Harmony Township Alfred Mathews, *History of Wayne, Pike, and Monroe Counties, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: R. T. Peck and Company, 1886), 718–19. He owned “several thousand acres of land, on which he engaged in lumbering,” and his lumbermen took sawn lumber to Hale’s Eddy and from there down the river to Philadelphia. J. H. Beers and Co., *Commemorative Biographical Record of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Including the Counties of Susquehanna, Wayne, Pike and Monroe* (Chicago: J. H. Beers and Co., 1900), 1232, 1247–48.

occurred. Ever the Democrat, as was the Hale family, Comfort lamented how everyone blamed a noticeable decline in Harmony on Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren because of the collapse of America's banking system. He blamed Federalists and Whigs for their problems.²⁸⁰

John Comfort saved his harshest words for the decline of religion in Harmony. He lamented the state of religion in letter after letter for more than a decade. "It was at a very Low ebb with us," he complained.²⁸¹ The whole nature of Methodism changed during the years he and the Hales were members, and many of the first generation converts in Harmony did not comfortably change with it. What had been a small denomination ridiculed by members of the established Churches, a denomination that in Harmony included shouts of praise, falling to the floor in religious ecstasy, and above all direct and immediate answers to prayers, had become the largest denomination in America by 1820. It now included academically trained ministers rather than uneducated circuit riders and included a formal liturgy and structured meetings where once had been primarily organic and expressive outdoor rural meetings reverberating from the mountainsides at the beginning of the century. One of these trained ministers had a position in the Methodist church in Lanesboro. But he was more interested in preparing formal, well-polished sermons than in getting out to serve the poor or minister to his community. After concluding their new Methodist minister was more interested in money than he was in fulfilling his ministerial duties, Comfort wrote, "My Dear Son if this is christianity or Methodism How I have been deceived for more than thirty eight years."²⁸²

Along with what Comfort perceived as religious decline, economic decline settled in their valley contributing to an exodus of many of the valley's second generation. Many had already left for education, or to follow spouses who preferred to live elsewhere. The first of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's children to leave were those daughters who had married husbands from outside the community. Elizabeth Wasson moved with her husband to nearby Colesville in late 1829. Emma left permanently with her husband in September 1830. Tryal Morse continued to live in a rude log cabin in the woods as her husband had local family, and Phebe's husband worked in the sawmill across the river with some of the Hales. But as the economy continued its downward trend, all of the Hale children who could left

²⁸⁰John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, Letter, February 23, 1838.

²⁸¹John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, Letter February 29, 1836.

²⁸²John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, Harmony, September 25, 1847.

the valley a few at a time. John Comfort wrote his son on Christmas Eve 1836 of the Hale family exodus. "Jesse Hale Isaac W Hale and Reuben Hale have moved on the Allegany near Olian; and David Hale intends to go next spring. So we have travel[ed] round over the world seeking a place of abode that suits our views; but how soon all our Labors must end and we go to our Long home while the mourners go about the streets. Lord help me to be prepared to go to rest when thou shalt remove me hence."²⁸³ The next day the oldest of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's daughters, Phebe, died. She found her "long home" before her parents, as they placed her in a coffin and buried her nearby in the Hale family cemetery plot. Her husband, Dennison Root, and their children stayed in the Susquehanna Valley where some of their descendants live today. While Comfort did not elaborate on the details of the Hale family exodus, or the apparent religious conflict he had with the family, the following spring he wrote to his son, "Jesse Hale Ward Hale and Reuben Hale moved last season out on the Alegany and David Hale went this winter the last of sleighing to the same place and also Daniel Westfall moved near the same place the fore part of winter. . . . poor Backsliden Lanesboro is left to mourn her barrenness and Distance from her Duty and privilege."²⁸⁴ The call of better opportunities elsewhere continued to draw the Hale family out of the valley until Alva Hale was the only child of Isaac and Elizabeth who still lived near them.

Perhaps part of Comfort's lament about religious decline in the Susquehanna Valley was more a reflection of his own aging and the aging of his principal religious associates that it was due to any specific events. Some of those he had known for years were now leaving their community, and others were growing old along with him. Comfort wrote, "Nathaniel Lewis Jr. [Nathaniel C. Lewis] had his leg broke last spring by the kick of an ox & has had it amputated above the knee. He is now nearly well. Elder Lewis is [in] good health for and old man. He yet preaches some."²⁸⁵ The following year Comfort noted, "old Br Lewis preaches some yet he & sister Lewis enjoys good health for such old people."²⁸⁶

Isaac and Elizabeth Hale did not enjoy the same good health as they

²⁸³John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, December 24, 1836, punctuation added for clarity.

²⁸⁴John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, April 8, 1837.

²⁸⁵John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, July 11, 1839, punctuation added for clarity.

²⁸⁶John Comfort, letter to Silas Comfort, January 17, 1840.

aged. Forty-eight years after the young, ambitious couple first settled their farm together, Isaac dictated his will on December 23, 1838, two days short of the second anniversary of Phebe's death. He left all the personal property, furniture, clothing, and cooking utensils to his wife Elizabeth. He had already sold some of his property, but he left, "All the farm, 97 acres with all buildings and imp[rovements]" to his son Alva, who would care for his mother. Alva was to give each of the other sons \$25.00, and the daughters, including Emma, would receive "what would be proper." Isaac also requested that he be buried on his own land "back of the garden near the line betwixt me and Joseph McKune, Jr."²⁸⁷ Isaac was always a man of solitude, and so it was perhaps natural that he chose not to be crowded in the cemetery a few hundred feet away with all of the other graves, but the spot he selected was right next to the home where his son-in-law Joseph Smith had lived—almost as if he were still protecting his family from that place. A grandson recalled the family gathering around Isaac's bed on January 11, 1839, as he charged them, "You must not believe in Jo Smith or any false doctrines, but believe in the Holy Bible. In it you will find the words of eternal life."²⁸⁸ Isaac died and was interred below the garden on his farm.

Alva Hale, who had rented property his whole married life, finally became a landowner and moved back onto the farm where he grew up to better care for his mother. Despite Isaac's deathbed charge to his family, after his death a rift between him and his daughter Emma and her husband seemed to no longer matter to his immediate family. A grandson of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale, Lorenzo D. Wasson left the valley for Nauvoo, Illinois, perhaps to share news of Isaac's death, but also to learn more about his aunt's unusual religion. Upon news of her father's death, Emma seemed to feel she could now write her mother and siblings. She initiated contact with her family. Their separation had been so complete, she listed her children and each of their names so her mother could learn of her own grandchildren. Emma told her mother they were called Mormons, a development that occurred after they had left the Susquehanna Valley. And she wrote them of the great city her fellow believers were building called Nauvoo where the entire Hale family could come to live, even if they did not accept her religion.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷Wills and Probate Inventories, Book 1, 212–13, December 23, 1838, Susquehanna County, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

²⁸⁸Byron Hale, "Reuben Hale's Obituary," newspaper clipping in possession of descendants of Alva Hale, copy in author's possession.

²⁸⁹Lorenzo D. Wasson, letter to David Hale (Independence, P. O., Washing-

In response to Emma's invitation, Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's children who had already left the Susquehanna Valley settled farms within visiting distance of the city of Nauvoo, although they elected to not live within the Mormon community. Her mother, Elizabeth, was too ill to travel. Alva remained in the valley with his family and cared for her.

After a five month battle with consumption, Elizabeth's health began to fail. Ten days before her death she became quite uncomfortable. But in her son's eyes she managed to die a good Christian death as was expected at the time. Elizabeth laid her arms across her chest and passed quietly away "with out stiring or makeing any motion whatever" at two o'clock in the morning on February 16, 1842. Alva wrote to his brothers and sisters in an awkward hand using his idiosyncratic spelling, "she has gown to Heave Heaven the evidence she gave to the world will be the means of some confirming the tru truths of the Bible for to dy is gain to those that hav lived a godly life. She wold often say to those that came to see hir for they ware many that she knew that hir Redemer liveth and she longd to bea at rest in the paradise of god."²⁹⁰

After Elizabeth's death, Alva saw that his mother was buried in the family plot in the nearby cemetery. He reminisced in his letter to his brothers and sisters of their childhood with their faithful parents. "When I think back to the time when My Fathers family cold [could] all meet to gether under our Father and hear the sound of our Father and Mothers voy-ses their admonitions counsils and reproffs and now see whare we are all placed five Brothers in five different stats my eyes ove[r] flow with tears, a family that was brought up to gether til we ware men grown and ^now^ so wonderfully scatered (my desire and prer to God is that if we never meet on earth we may meet in heven.)"²⁹¹

Soon Alva prepared to go west and settle in Amboy, Illinois, within visiting distance of Nauvoo, as his brothers also gathered in the same area to live in close circumstances again. He sold to the railroad the portion of the farm where his father's body was buried with the agreement the railroad would move Isaac Hale to the cemetery before laying down track over the burial spot. Ground penetrating radar suggests the railroad kept its agree-

ton Co., Pennsylvania), February 1841, Nauvoo, Illinois, CHL. Part of this letter is written in Emma Smith's hand and part in Joseph Smith's hand.

²⁹⁰Alva Hale, "Letter to His Brothers and Sisters, February 20, 1842," Wilford C. Wood Museum Collection, Bountiful, Utah.

²⁹¹Hale, "Letter to His Brothers and Sisters."

ment as there is a body where Isaac Hale's matching headstone stands next to Elizabeth's in the cemetery.²⁹² Radar also suggests there are two bodies without headstones buried next to him. These may be the bodies of other family members or neighbors moved at the same time or earlier forgotten burials. Alva placed matching headstones on his parent's graves. The epitaph on Isaac's headstone Alva borrowed from Benjamin Franklin:

The body of Isaac Hale,
the hunter,
Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stript of its' lettering and gilding,
Lies here, food for worms,
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed,
Appear in a new and more beautiful edition,
Corrected and amended.

The epitaph likely came from an 1840 collection of the writings of Franklin that appeared shortly after Isaac Hale died since it was a modified form of Franklin's epitaph first appearing in an appendix of the volume and claiming a Franklin contemporary had reworked the epitaph and showed it to Franklin for his approval. This is the same version that was picked up by late nineteenth century religious publications and reprinted many times.²⁹³

Alva Hale sold the rest of his parents' farm to the Dayton family in 1842, and the Daytons then rented it to Peter Blodgett. The home and farm then passed on to others.²⁹⁴ Alva moved west to Amboy, Illinois in the general area where the Hale family had gathered again. David Hale's later financial records indicate Alva gave him the twenty-five dollars left him in Isaac's will. Presumably each of the other children also inherited a small

²⁹²Ben Pykles, personal communication to author, December 28, 2011. There are also two other individuals buried in unmarked graves within the row of Hale family headstones.

²⁹³Jared Sparks, *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Company, 1840), 1:596–97.

²⁹⁴The later history of the home and Hale property are documented in Mark Staker, "Emma Hale Smith and Her Family in Harmony, Pennsylvania," *Historic Sites Files*, 2010, CHL.

sum from their parents.²⁹⁵

Conclusion

When Joseph Smith arrived at the Hale farm in the fall of 1825, he found a family living in fashionable comfort incorporating in their lives American ideals of refinement and sophistication. The Hale home not only offered Isaac and Elizabeth Hale's children a measure of respectability, it added to Isaac and Elizabeth's own prominence in the community lending gentility to their lives. Although Mr. Hale was remembered as "a stiff old Methodist, and . . . a sturdy but somewhat eccentric man," he was also remembered as the wealthiest Methodist in the valley.²⁹⁶ After decades of struggle and hardship, the Hale family had acquired the furnishings of genteel living. During their early settlement, the family scattered their refuse about their yard, after they built their mansion the artifact scatter around their home was minimal. The site was "very clean" as if they had internalized Methodist founder John Wesley's aphorism "cleanliness is next to godliness."²⁹⁷ Despite John Comfort's later concerns that an interest in pursuing wealth was creeping into their Methodist community and overshadowing religious devotion, the Hale family appears to have reconciled the role of wealth into their religious practice. The Hale home was a place for tea parties and other social gatherings that included religious worship and tied the Hale family to their community. It helped shape their place in that community as the residence of a pious, Christian family.

It is unlikely nineteen-year-old Joseph Smith was attuned to the Hale family's social position or that of other members of the community in November 1825. The standards of a genteel life required young people to follow a long list of specific behaviors toward their parents, and Joseph appears to have been unaware of these. Children were to only address their parents with a title of respect, such as using "Sir." They were

²⁹⁵See extended online version of Staker and Jensen, "David Hale's Store Ledger" and later entries in the original ledger.

²⁹⁶Vogel, Frederick G. Mather, "The Early Mormons. Joe Smith Operates at Susquehanna," *Binghamton Daily Republican*, 29 July 1880," *Early Mormon Documents* 4:345–66. Chaffee, *History of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 721.

²⁹⁷Matt Kirk and Corey McQuinn, Hartgen and Associates, Inc. Archaeologists, personal communications to author, July and August 2014.

to always bow when approaching their parents. They were not allowed to come into a room where their parents were talking with strangers, unless they were invited in; and if a stranger came in to talk to their parents, they were to bow and withdraw from the room.²⁹⁸ A good son would wait to speak to his father until spoken to, and then answer in as few words as possible. A whole list of rules about how to speak, listen, and interact with parents, social superiors, and the public in general had developed as part of proper and refined life.²⁹⁹ Unless a young man had read the popular etiquette books of the day, he was unlikely to know all of these rules. Isaac Hale remembered of Joseph, “his appearance at this time, was that of a careless young man—not very well educated, and very saucy and insolent to his father.”³⁰⁰

While it is unlikely Isaac knew much about Joseph’s education from observing him with the treasure diggers, writing letters was an important part of courting during the period and this gave Isaac an opportunity to evaluate Joseph’s abilities. As Joseph courted Emma during the winter of 1825–1826, much of this was apparently done through customary letters. A proper young lady or gentleman was to write to a slight acquaintance in the third person, was not to write in a frank, friendly style, and was not to keep letters confidential from his or her parents.³⁰¹ Emma likely showed her father Joseph’s courting letters, and Isaac Hale’s evaluation of his abilities was likely similar to that of Emma, who noted, “Joseph Smith . . . could neither write nor dictate a coherent well-worded letter,” during that early period.³⁰² He may have dictated some of his letters to Stowell family members who wrote for him in hopes of improving his prospects with Emma. Not surprisingly, Joseph Smith spent the winter of 1825–1826 attending school.³⁰³ This brief opportunity to improve his education apparently did

²⁹⁸S. Hall, *The School of Good Manners, Composed for the Help of Parents in Teaching their Children* (Boston: S. Hall, 1790), 10–11.

²⁹⁹Bushman, *Refinement of America*, 30–60.

³⁰⁰Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 578.

³⁰¹Hartley later collected and recounted in great detail rules for correspondence during courting. Florence Hartley, *The Ladies’ Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness* (Boston: G. W. Cottrell, Publisher, 1860), 124.

³⁰²Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints Herald* 26 (October 1, 1879): 290.

³⁰³Vogel, “Josiah Stowell, Jr., to John S. Fullmer, 17 February 1843,” *Ear-*

not raise it to Isaac Hale’s standards.

The Hales were among a small number of prominent families in the valley who established a standard of ethical behavior for the community. The other families were those of John Hilborn, Martin Lane, and John Comfort. Their families all lived in Lanesville where the generally shallow river water filled the air with a constant roar and the creaking of several sawmills added the noise of industry and pious work to the setting. Quaker John Hilborn was the best educated man in the valley. While Isaac Hale may have been the wealthiest Methodist, Hilborn had significantly more land and made more money selling land to many of the valley’s settlers than was possible in Isaac’s meat marketing business. His substantial frame home was among the first elegant homes in the valley and the location where the Quakers held their worship meetings. Isaac Hale, and perhaps his family, likely attended these meetings during the early settlement period. Methodist Martin Lane controlled the turnpike, operated a large sawmill, and was a partner in a dry goods store. He was also educated and his son Jesse Lane served as a local Justice of the Peace. When John and Phoebe Comfort moved to Harmony in 1808, built a large sawmill, opened a mercantile institution, farmed hundreds of acres of prime land, and purchased the large Pickering “country house,” they instantly became not only one of the wealthiest families in the township, but members of this same elite group that established social order and respectability for the rest of their remote mountain valley. When the Comforts joined the Methodists the year after their arrival, during the period when Methodism became Harmony’s dominant religion, they became closely allied with the prominent Hale family. After the Hale family built their own “mansion” during the time of the Comfort conversions, the two families had a great deal in common. Methodists in the township met at either one home or the other for worship services, elections, court sessions, or other community events. Both families were financially well placed and both played a significant role in community life. The Comforts named their son born May 15, 1811, Isaac Lewis Comfort. When a boatman was murdered nearby for the money he carried, the men who found the body first ran to the Martin Lane home, when he was not there, they approached John Comfort who led

ly Mormon Documents, 4:78, 80; Vogel, “Lyman Stowell Reminiscence, 1901,” *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:86.

the investigation, and Isaac Hale sat in on the coroner's inquest.³⁰⁴

As Alva Hale sat on a jury September 3, 1827, just a few weeks before he rode to New York to pick up his sister Emma and her new husband and bring them back to the valley, the court described him as among the "good and lawful men" sworn to render a verdict.³⁰⁵ The citizens of Harmony Township frequently elected Alva constable, and he often traded the position with Joseph McKune or John Comfort. Jesse Hale served in various elected positions including superintendent of the local schools for District 3 while John Comfort served for District 1. David Hale also served as a school superintendent.³⁰⁶ But while respectable and well off, using their log home as the local school for a period, the Hale family did not all have the same education as did the Comfort family. John Comfort was the first Justice of the Peace in Harmony Township. He had exceptional spelling and wrote letters in a refined, practiced hand. His sons all had good educations and apparently attended one of the local advanced Seminaries in the county, perhaps the one that opened in nearby Great Bend in 1811.³⁰⁷ Silas Comfort went to New York to earn his doctorate in theology and later became a leading Methodist scholar producing an impressive list of books.

In contrast, the older Hale sons were raised in the valley before it had schools or educational opportunities. Their father, Isaac, spent his time in the backwoods and had no known formal education. The youngest Hale son, Reuben, could write well enough to serve as Joseph Smith's scribe, and the younger daughters were apparently also educated. Emma apparently had an education equal to the other prominent members of the community. Tradition claims for her some advanced education and surviving letters suggest she was not only a good speller but articulate and refined in her writing.³⁰⁸ It was natural for Isaac and Elizabeth Hale to hope for their

³⁰⁴"Trial Notes, Scribe A" and "Trial Notes, Scribe B."

³⁰⁵"Commonwealth vs. Erastus Fink, September 4, 1827," Quarter Sessions Docket, Susquehanna County, 3:107.

³⁰⁶See "Returned as Elected," Quarter Sessions Docket, Susquehanna County, 3: 36–37, 70–71, 101, 120.

³⁰⁷Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 82–83.

³⁰⁸Although Raymond Bailey noted "It is thought [Emma] . . . attended a Girl's school for one year," he did not document his source. Raymond T. Bailey, "Emma Hale: Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith," (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952), 13. It is likely he drew his information from the notes

daughter Emma a marriage that matched her with someone who reached her level of education.

One of Emma's young female contemporaries described what she considered tragic circumstances connected to another woman in their area. This lady was "a very intelligent woman, when young she moved in the first circles of society. — But she unfortunately married a British Officer who had a wife in England which was afterwards discovered. After this she married a man far inferior to her in every respect and far beneath her in rank."³⁰⁹ This was a concern of the refined social classes. Isaac Hale's perception of Joseph was that he was "not very well educated," "he was a stranger," and he "followed a business that I could not approve."³¹⁰ Given the social position and wealth of the Comfort family, when John and Phoebe Comfort's son James was born in September 1805, he must have soon become one of the most eligible bachelors in the valley. He was the only young man in the valley Emma's age that was not a "stranger" and yet also met all the education and business expectations of Isaac Hale.

While the Hales did not document Isaac's marriage intentions for his children, and there is no information on Emma's choice of local marriage prospects, James eventually married another young woman in their village, Mary Ann McKune, on September 7, 1830, within a few days of Joseph and Emma Smith's permanent departure from Harmony. The young women in the McKune family married most of the prominent men in the township. Fanny Winters, a stepdaughter of Joseph McKune Sr., married Benjamin Comfort on May 12, 1829, and Catherine Winters, a sister of Fanny, mar-

of Vesta Pierce Crawford, who interviewed descendants of Emma Hale in the 1950s but likewise did not document her sources well. There is some evidence that Crawford may have been correct. Emily Austin noted Emma was "a school teacher, a fine girl, of good repute and respectable, though poor parentage." Emily M. Austin, *Mormonism, or, Life Among the Mormons* (Madison, Wisc.: M. J. Cantwell, 1882), 34. Surviving writing examples suggest Emma was a skilled writer, something her parents and older siblings could not have provided her. If she attended a "Girl's school," the only one in her vicinity was the Female Seminary that operated a few miles west of her parent's home in Great Bend Township. Searle, diary, June 1832–Nov. 1833, September 2, 1832; Theological Seminary, *General Catalogue of the Theological Seminary* (Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1883), 63, 344; "F.A. Strale," *United States Catholic Intelligencer*, September 21, 1832, 415.

³⁰⁹Searle, Diary, June 1832–Nov. 1833, June 14, 1832.

³¹⁰Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 578.

ried George W. Lane, a nephew of influential minister George Lane and son of Martin Lane, the prominent businessman after whom Lanesville was named.³¹¹ Robert McKune married Mary Hilborn and they moved into the Hilborn home at the death of her father, John.³¹² Hale sons Jesse and Ward each married a McKune girl as well, and the other Hale children married locally except Emma. But none of the Hale children married into prominent local families.

As soon as Emma learned of her father's death, she wrote her Hale family from her own "mansion" in Nauvoo and invited them to participate in the refined aspects of her life, even if they chose not to become Mormons. But she did not need to offer them prominence in the community. They were already famous due to her. Local historians explored their history, their minister wrote about them in his autobiography, and during the late nineteenth century the steamboat Erminie took tourists downriver to see their property and hear about Joseph Smith.³¹³ Although Isaac Hale may have wished a life of distinguished solitude, he was thrust onto the public arena against his will. Some historians have emphasized Isaac Hale's adversarial relationship with Joseph Smith, and others have suggested there may have initially been a more cooperative relationship between the two. It is clear the two men influenced each other. On his deathbed Isaac could not resist mentioning Joseph Smith's name, while Joseph wrote in his own history how his wife's father had acted "under Divine providence" in his defense.³¹⁴

³¹¹"The amiable" Miss Fanny Winters married Benjamin Comfort on May 12, 1829, *The Susquehanna Register* 4, no. 24, May 15, 1829: 3; "George W. Lane Marries C. Winters," *Register and Northern Farmer*, September 8, 1842.

³¹²Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 92.

³¹³Subject Files, Susquehanna County Historical Society.

³¹⁴George Q. Cannon described "Isaac Hale and his family" as "bitter opponents" of Joseph Smith and his work, George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Joseph Smith, The Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 93. One historian argued that unsatisfied greed, hurt pride, and infectious hatred motivated Isaac Hale. Susan Easton Black, "Isaac Hale: Antagonist of Joseph Smith," *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York*, 1992, 93–111. While Emily Blackman took a consistently negative approach in her description of Isaac Hale's relationship with Joseph, she also acknowledged: "It is thought that Mr. Hale was a little deluded at first, as well as others, in regard to Joe's prophecy." Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 103. Joseph and Hiel Lewis read her account and used it as a source for parts of their own recollection

six years later in which they repeated her conclusions, Joseph and Hiel Lewis, "Mormon History, A New Chapter, About to be Published." Lucy Smith met the Hales and Joseph Smith knew them well. They both came to different conclusions than have later Latter-day Saint writers. Lucy, wrote with a tone of respect about the "intelligent" Isaac, Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 430. Joseph wrote with a similar tone of respect and admiration even after his father-in-law had written a negative affidavit about him, See *JSP*, H1: 234; Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 259 note 82; Oliver Cowdery, "Letter VIII," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 1 (October 1835): 200.